

THE "MACHINE" ABOLISHED
AND
THE PEOPLE RESTORED TO POWER

CLARK





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THE "MACHINE" ABOLISHED

AND THE

PEOPLE RESTORED TO POWER

BY THE

ORGANIZATION OF ALL THE PEOPLE ON
THE LINES OF PARTY ORGANIZATION

BY

CHARLES C. P. CLARK, M.D.

115-013
8/6/11

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK & LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

1900



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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

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THE "MACHINE" ABOLISHED

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY AND EXPLANATORY

THE following discourse proposes a radical change in the present method of popular election.

Taking notice of the generally conceded fact that the conduct of government in its various spheres in this country is little satisfactory to fair intelligence, except in townships, and far below what the American people have a right to expect; and recognizing that this must be immediately due not to the unsoundness of its principles, but to the unfitness of the men elected to administer it, my argument proceeds to inquire why the people elect unfit men. Joining in the common and just reply to this question, that "we have to vote for the men nominated by Party Organizations, or else throw away our votes," I then proceed to the more difficult and, so far as I have seen, the as yet unsolved problem of the origin of this domination.

How has it come about that in every city, county, and state, and in the nation, a mere handful of men,

and not seldom a single man, no way supereminent in intelligence, virtue, or public esteem, and self-appointed to this vital function, have become able by activity, intrigue, and especially by organization, to impose their will upon us, while nineteen out of twenty of the general mass of citizens, and more than that proportion of those of the best repute, equally concerned in the general good, sit idly by? Why is the *selection*—mark the pregnant meaning of the word—of our highest magistrates handed over to a Platt or a Croker, or a band of volunteer party organizers?

My answer is, that under our present system of elections the people in populous constituencies are utterly powerless toward the *selection* of a public officer. They can *elect*, or take their choice between two or three, or half a dozen; but they have no way of concentrating their votes without such aid from outside the law as is now afforded by Party Organizations. These organizations are in fact so necessary for that purpose, under our present method of election, that without them the public will would be utterly impotent, and public policy a chaos.

Referring next to the historic facts that, wherever originating, the present methods of political or Party Organization, by primaries and conventions, spread over the whole country—as it were, between sun and sun; that in all essential particulars they are uniform, and that they have been unaltered from the beginning, I argue that these methods are of nature, and are necessary to the collection of the

public will and the concentration of the general voice.

It is simply by employing this great truth, overlooked by the law, that an oligarchy of active, intriguing, and, most often, self-seeking men, have become possessed of their present absolute control, through one party or the other, of the whole officering of our so-called republican government in all its various spheres and functions, and consequently of its conduct and administration. Nor is there any possibility of escaping their tyranny, or hope of much alleviating it, until the whole body politic is organized substantially on the lines of Party Organization, with this great difference, that what is now but a party nomination shall be a popular election and be final. This done, better men will be chosen, and the rule of the people, unless democracy itself be but a snare, will move on toward heights of justice, beneficence, and peace as yet undreamed of. It is to substantiating these propositions that my argument is addressed.

The fundamental principles of Party Organization are three, and I beg the reader to consider how obviously sound they are in all social procedure, and how plainly essential to that empowerment of the public will which constitutes democracy:

I. When a number of men are in pursuit of a common object, such as the choice of a public officer or representative of any kind, it is absolutely essential to the right accomplishment of their purpose that they meet together in actual and orderly conference.

II. When the number is too great for such personal

assembly of them all, as in the selection of a governor, or mayor, or alderman, it is then equally necessary that they be divided into squads or companies of size suitable for such conference, whose chosen delegates shall carry to its accomplishment the common will.

III. And where these primary delegates are too numerous for free, calm, and full consultation together, as in the selection of a governor or the mayor of a great city, they must for that purpose be assembled by counties, or other minor civil division, and appoint delegates of a higher grade, who, gathered in convention, shall select and appoint such high functionary or functionaries.

In the substitution of this system for our present delusive election method, many changes of detail, in addition to the elimination of party, will need to be made. Above all will this be the case with the construction and conduct of the primary, which, though the sole arena where the ordinary voter takes any effective part toward the selection of public magistrates, is now so conditioned and conducted as to be, despite the many enactments for its better regulation, the mere tool of partisan exploiters, and a forgery of true democracy. It enables much less than one-tenth of the people to rule all the rest.

Unfortunately, we now leave the operation of this method of organization in the hands only of political ambition, partisan zeal, self-seeking, and lawlessness, where its all-comprehensive reach and irresistible potency are alone to be admired. How it will behave under the authority and strict regulation of law, and in the hands of the people themselves, in a primary conducted strictly after the

fashion of the immortal town-meeting of New England, as is here proposed, is somewhat matter of speculation. It is much a question of human nature, and particularly of our capacity for self-government.

As little instruction can be found in books; for, much as has been written on the philosophy of democratic politics, and of the capacity of the people for self-government, the fact is that no real government by the people on any larger than the township scale has ever been tried, but only forms of that false democracy under which we are now living; nor has the capacity of the people at large, as an organized entity — organized as party is now organized—ever been studied. Not till they are organized can the capacity of the people be measured.

Therefore, what will happen when popular government is conditioned as will be here proposed, is matter of opinion, and must be largely left to the instructed imagination to forecast. The judgment that will correctly anticipate results must be based on a careful study of the known facts of human nature in its present stage of enlightenment in this country. The necessary space will be given to this essential part of my appeal.

Not for the first time is my scheme now presented to the public. A brief account of it in pamphlet form was published many years ago, and was widely circulated by the favor of the late eminent philosopher and philanthropist, Peter Cooper. Though issuing from a pen and press almost unknown—a maverick, as it were, in the herd of recognized

literature—its ideas met with wide attention and the most constant and enthusiastic approval from the highest quarters. It was reprinted almost or quite entire in such prominent organs of opinion as the *Philadelphia Law Journal* and the *Staats-Zeitung* of New York. "This is just what is wanted," seemed to be the unanimous verdict of its readers.¹ And

¹ "I deem the ideas so important and well expressed that I can do no better service to the cause of progress in the institutions of the country than to disseminate it widely among the thinking men of the country, and its legislators."—*Peter Cooper*.

"It is one of the few documents addressed to the public conscience which seriously proposes a scheme of neutralization of evils, and, at the same time, a substitution of something else. . . . It will confound rings and break slates; it will teach self-reliance and public responsibility to every voter. . . . It will diminish the opportunities of politicians, and, in any event, it will be an improvement on the present plan. . . . The plan is more republican than any we possess, for it brings high and low, without previous consultation, together, and gives every voter an influence in the visible body, with the right of speech and the certainty of being counted. . . . *Apparent obstacles are in reality arguments for the plan.*"—*Geo. Alfred Townsend in the Chicago Tribune*.

"A NEW GOVERNMENTAL IDEA.—A radical and thoroughgoing remedy for the alarming abuses of party politics has been devised by Dr. C. C. P. Clark, of Oswego, New York. It promises to purify the structure of government at its very base, by enabling the citizen always to exercise his suffrage intelligently, and by preventing any interference with such exercise by the class of managing, self-seeking politicians. . . . This unknown Lysurgus has elaborated a simple device which is really full of promise—one which will bear the severest examination, and which, however critically inspected, betrays no loophole through which the chicanery, corruption, and impudence of politicians could seek an entrance. It must effect, we verily believe, wherever put in operation, an immediate and bloodless revolution, displacing our present oligarchy of the worst elements

yet year after year went by, and nobody appeared to urge anywhere a trial of an endeavor at reform so fundamental.

At length, however, being naturally desirous to see my progeny hatched into life, finding that the fast-dropping sands of life had already brought me beyond its normal limit, and remembering that the only question anywhere raised about my device related to its practicability, or the likelihood of its acceptance by the people themselves, I determined in 1892 to test this problem by proposing to the voters of Oswego, N. Y., a city of twenty-five thousand population, the introduction of my device into the

of society for a genuine aristocracy of intelligence, honesty, and patriotism."—*Philadelphia Press*, J. W. Forney, Editor.

"The points made are so interesting and important to all citizens of this country that we desire to call the attention of our readers to it."—*Prof. A. L. Perry in New York Evening Post*.

"It contains the idea on which any great reform in our political system must rest."—*The Nation*.

"It would be a proud day for the Pennsylvania convention if it would inaugurate this reform, which would abolish the evils of the caucus system and restore the people to power."—*Erie (Pa.) Dispatch*.

"The author hits the pith of existing abuses. . . . We commend his plan to the earnest consideration of political reformers."—*New York World*.

"I consider it a very valuable contribution to political truth, and every way worthy of the most careful consideration."—*Hon. Robert Gilchrist, N. J.*

"It is very able, excellent, patriotic, and just."—*Samuel J. Bayard*.

"I have read it with very great interest, and cannot but regard it as an original and very remarkable production."—*Francis Jordan, Secretary of State, Pa.*

city charter as the legal method of choosing municipal officers. I had followed the profession of medicine there for forty years, was well known and sufficiently respected, though without any great personal influence. A few of my neighbors were familiar with and approved the scheme, but it had no way been a subject of general interest among the voters. I shall recount the story of the undertaking in some detail, because it shows not only how the people, but also the politicians, including Tammany itself, looked at the subject.

In the first place, I prepared a short statement and explanation of my scheme, indicating a few of the chief advantages that it has over the present system of election, dwelling especially on the fact that it is the delegates of party caucuses who now *select* all our principal municipal officers, and that the kind of caucus which I propose would surely make a better choice. To this were subscribed the names, including my own, of half a dozen well-known citizens favorably disposed to the project. Notice was also given that petitions to the Legislature asking for an amendment of the city charter which should provide for the employment of the proposed device in our municipal elections, would be placed for signature at the banks and some other places of resort.

This paper was printed in both our daily journals, and in less than four weeks the petitions bore the signatures of substantially the whole body of taxpayers, with near half of the voters of every sort. A very little canvassing, at trifling cost, secured a

large majority of them all. Indeed, a closer approach to unanimity never went to any capitol. A good deal of discussion of the subject was had in editorials and outside contributions to the public prints, but very few objections were suggested, and these either trifling or mistakenly based.¹

A proper bill, certified as constitutional by a member of the Supreme Court, was then prepared and sent to our representatives in the House of Assembly and the Senate. Supported as it was, they

¹ OSWEGO, N. Y., September 1, 1896.

DR. C. C. P. CLARK—

MY DEAR SIR: As the Democratic Mayor of the City of Oswego elected in 1892 and in 1893, I became well informed in regard to the sentiments of the voters of that city concerning the non-partisan or town-meeting system of elections devised by you, and urged upon the State Legislature in the sessions of 1893 and 1894, and which I myself was heartily in favor of. The measure was heartily approved of with substantial unanimity by the people of that city immediately upon your describing and explaining it in the public prints, and was asked for, either by signatures to petitions or in personal letters to those in power at Albany, by an overwhelming majority of the tax-paying and more intelligent classes of voters in both parties. In fact, the only opposition to it here that I heard of came from a small handful of self-seeking politicians, also of both parties, who, however, were able, I am sorry to say, to persuade a Democratic Governor to kill it by a veto after it had passed both houses of the Legislature.

W. J. BULGER.

DR. C. C. P. CLARK—

DEAR SIR: As the present Republican Mayor of Oswego, I would state that I favored the adoption of the plan of municipal elections above referred to before the Senate committee in 1894, and believe that a substantial majority of the citizens of Oswego were in favor of the measure.

Yours truly,

J. D. HIGGINS.

could not do otherwise than favor its enactment, which would thus presumably be secured, it being a settled practice there to trust local bills to the immediate representatives of the locality asking for them. Accordingly the bill passed the Assembly with little opposition. It was next to go to the Senate.

Now were our hopes high, but soon to be dashed to the ground by an occurrence which furnishes a key to all the disasters that ensued. What bird in the air, personal astuteness, or message from above or from below it was that carried the matter, I know not; but at this juncture the Lieutenant-Governor, William H. Sheehan, prime minister also then of Democratic councils at Albany, in some way became aware of the fatal poison for such as he that lurked in this innocent-seeming measure, and hastened to its assassination. He went to Mr. D. E. Ainsworth, our member of the Assembly, who had the bill in special charge, and advised him not to carry the bill to the Senate, which was then Democratic, for it would never be allowed even to be reported from a committee; frankly adding that "If Oswego gets this, other cities will want it; and then what will become of us fellows?"

Informed of this calamity by a letter from our representative, Mr. Ainsworth, the Republican "leader" of the Assembly, I visited Mr. Sheehan, but found him immovable. Our conversation made it evident that he fully comprehended the meaning of the bill, and greatly apprehended that a single example of the operation of the proposed

method of elections would sooner or later work sure destruction to the present machinery of politics.

Our next Legislature was Republican in both houses, the Governor still a Democrat. The change gave us new hope, Governor Flower being regarded as an upright man. As the session approached we were surprised to learn that all our petitions and other documents relating to the subject had wholly disappeared from the official guardianship with which they had been left at Albany. These were, however, easily replaced, only that our politicians of both parties, who the previous year had appeared indifferent, now unanimously refused their names to the petitions, and in other ways undertook to obstruct the business. At the capitol everything went on as before until it came to a hearing before the committee of the Senate to which the matter had been referred. Having learned that the bill would meet with strong opposition, its friends appeared there in greater and more distinguished force, as the members of the committee reported, than had for many years been seen on a like occasion. On hand against it was also found nigh every leading politician of Oswego, Republican and Democratic. The bill, however, after a vehement contest, was favorably reported, probably as matter of course, since, fortunately, our immediate representatives, the late Senator Mullin and Mr. Ainsworth, of the Assembly, were the Republican leaders in their respective houses, and were already committed in favor of the measure.

Although the bill would now seem secure, yet it had inspired such terror that when it came up for final reading in the Senate the Tammany representatives in that body exhausted parliamentary art in endeavors to obstruct or side-track it. It passed by a single voice, every Democrat being against it, and one Republican refusing to vote. It was vetoed by the Governor in an idle message written by his young secretary, a Mr. Williams, and full of shameful misrepresentations, ineptitudes, and absurdities, the actual reason for its rejection being that Governor Flower's longing for political advancement was still unsatisfied and hopeful.

For three successive years since then our more immediate representative at Albany, as well as other legislators there to whom it has been offered, have refused even to introduce the bill, so bad has its name got to be among politicians.

All the important statements in this narrative are matter of public record. What does it mean? It means not only that the radical reconstruction of our election system set forth in the following pages is level with the common sense of the people and is strongly approved by them, but that, once put in employ, it would, in the acute and anxious estimation of professional politicians, prove fatal to their present domination. Why else should Lieutenant-Governor Sheehan, his party's leader, spring to arrest a measure that in no way concerned his city of Buffalo, or the State at large? Why else should Tammany rise from its lair in such anxiety about the addition of a few sections to the

charter of the little city of Oswego ? Let the reader answer.

But is there also another and a sadder lesson to be learned here ? Is it true that organizations of self-seekers have become so powerful as to smother at their will the public voice and forbid whatever is not friendly to their advancing rule ? Must it be inferred that no city will be able to command from a legislature permission to try this device in the election of its magistrates ?

Not so. Little Oswego labored under great disadvantages. It has no representative of its own at the capitol, nor can it control a nomination in either party. In consequence of our diminutive size, and perhaps of the general enslavement of the press to party politics and politicians, our undertaking got little attention in the State at large ; and, worse still, whatever notices it did get were almost invariably grossly misleading, a novel but almost merely mechanical feature of it being reported as its very substance. No, if Oswego had the population, the representation, and, accordingly, the weight and wide repute of Buffalo, Rochester, or Syracuse, we should to-day have in operation the method of popular election on which we have so earnestly set our hearts.

The strong machinery of politics, and nearly all the public press, being in the hands of men who would vigorously oppose this system, a wide, strong, organized, and persistent effort would be needed to establish this reform as an institution of the State at large. But, fortunately, this is not needed for the

full exhibition of its virtues, the constitutions of the several States generally permitting such a change in the charter of a single city. Fortunately, also, it is in the dense population of cities that this changed election method can be most readily put in operation, and there, too, perhaps, it is most needed. That in these the minds of the people are easily made to see its great advantages, the facts above set forth clearly establish. The work, indeed, was found much easier than could have been imagined. A sum of money absolutely trifling, employed in bringing to their attention the advantageous features of the system, and in circulating petitions, would gather in its favor the names of nine-tenths of the taxpayers in any city, however populous. What legislature could resist the steady urgency of such a force ?

But let not the man, or men, who engage in such undertaking forget how much the mass of their neighbors, however favorable to it they may be, will be found disposed to let somebody else do all the work. Much truth is in the maxim that "What is everybody's business is nobody's."

Surely, some virtuous change is of utmost necessity. Certain it is that popular ballot in its present shape is but a fascinating fraud. In the arms of this Delilah the Samson of democracy has laid his head, while the Philistines of politics have shorn him of his locks of beauty and strength. They have put out his eyes. They set him daily to grind in their mills. Let them beware, and let the people themselves beware, lest sometime, if early

warning be not taken, when as now they lead him forth to make them sport, his native vigor shall return to him, his mighty hands shall seek the pillars of their sacrilegious temples, and great calamities befall both politicians and people.

Let us consider the subject more closely.

CHAPTER II

THE TRUE ROOT OF OUR POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES EXPOSED

THE administration of public affairs in this country is by general admission far below what the American people have a right to expect. Only the successful politician, the fanatic partisan, or the patriot fool is satisfied with it.

Also is it agreed among intelligent observers, and is indeed beyond dispute, that the chief immediate cause of this misbehavior is the domination of Organizations of Party Politicians. But this explanation only sets the problem a step farther back. How have these Organizations obtained this mastery? Our constitutions purport to put the people in power: through what loophole in their construction has this spurious authority intruded? and why are we so powerless to drive the usurper out? I know not where this fundamental inquiry has been well answered, and hardly where its answer has been attempted. It will be here undertaken.

In the first place, it is evident that anything that displays such continued, wide-pervading, and resistless vigor as does Party Organization must be more than an accident or a conspiracy.

It is evident also that the power that has thus been able without violating the law to seize from the people the management of affairs; and that parcels out among its company, year after year, all public function, leaving to the mass of voters only to sign its commissions, must find its opportunity in some great defect in the present construction of democracy.

Finally, the foothold of this false pretender must be sought for somewhere in the present relation of the general will to governmental function. Democracy can make so great a failure only because of some bad mechanism, whereby its strong and virtuous hands are hindered from actually reaching the helm of affairs. Its principles are irrefragable; the fault must be with our methods. Let us search for the defect—not with the star-gazing implements of theory, nor with the spade, deep-delving in buried history—but by the near and level light of our own experience. It may be that we shall find here that *experimentum crucis* which is the touchstone alike of chemic and political truth.

Now, it is the matter of elections alone that connects the people with public authority. This is the shafting to which their intentions are geared at the one end and political results at the other. To elect good men to office is to have good government. Vain are laws and constitutions unless they accomplish this.

Now, the prevailing mode of establishing political authority among us is by direct popular vote. Here, somewhere, then, must be the fault. We have

witnessed the operation of this method of democratic rule in various spheres and under various circumstances; where has it worked best? and where worst? Is there any condition the presence or absence of which has seemed to make a good selection of public functionaries in this way easy, or difficult, —the rule, or the exception? To answer this question will certainly help us along, and may even plant our feet on solid ground.

If we survey the career of American democracy in its various fields, we shall find a class of cases in which the results of popular election have satisfied every reasonable desire. But we shall also find that this favorable issue has not depended on any of those elements that have been commonly regarded as the guarantee or keystone of democratic success. It has not followed especially upon the virtuousness or the intelligence of a community: for surely neither Philadelphia, nor St. Louis, the State of New York, nor the State of Illinois, is lacking in either of these particulars, though from the aspect of their politics you might think so. Nor has it happened particularly where long experience has trained the people in political function, or where they come to its discharge free from the trammels of prejudice and prescription. In the sombre picture of our politics Kansas shows not darker than Pennsylvania, Louisiana than Washington, New York than Chicago, or San Francisco than Baltimore. Neither is luxury or simplicity the cause. Proud and cultivated New York is no better, and no worse, off in the matter of politics than Omaha,

or any other crude city of the West. Nor is it education that has determined the matter. Virginia or South Carolina before the war, where not half of the voters knew how to read or write, had no occasion to be ashamed of its political conduct, while scores of places where schools abound, as in all our Northern cities, are miracles of incompetence and ravage in public affairs.

Experimentum Crucis.

Not with any one nor all of these, nor with any other of the various conditions that have been suggested as essential, have coincided the chief successes of democracy in this country, nor on them therefore could they have depended. The true account is very simple, and lies on the surface, and thereby perhaps has the more readily escaped the scrutiny of deep peering philosophy. The great instructive fact in our politics is that

*Popular Elections Work Well in SMALL and Ill in
LARGE Constituencies.*

Nowhere have political communities ever conducted themselves better than have the townships, boroughs, villages, and school districts of this country, or even perhaps as well. In the management of their local interests they have been models of skilfulness, justice, economy, and progress. New roads have been built where they were needed, the school and the schoolhouse have been suited to fair requirement, good public functionaries have been

selected and have stayed long in their places, yearly improving in skill, and the public money has almost never been lost or squandered. In short, there is no particular in the whole circle of political merit that would not be traced in their description. So the county boards of town supervisors in the State of New York, despite the disturbing and advancing invasion of national politics, are still such a specimen of success as neither the high Senate at Washington nor any other representation of large constituencies can compare with. In these narrow fields it was that American democracy was nursed and grew her charms, and here alone may still be seen the lineaments of her native beauty.

On the other hand, it is notorious that popular election does not generally work well in its larger fields, such as State, city, congressional, and other populous constituencies. Seldom is it in these that the fittest men are chosen to office: and, by consequence, their business is seldom either intelligently, zealously, or honestly conducted. Here flourish partisanship, rotation in office, the successful self-seeking of politicians, incompetency and corruption, official tyranny and official sloth.

The Causes of this Difference.

We are here on the threshold of a great discovery. To find the reason of this disparity between the successfulness of popular elections in a narrow field and in a wide one is to solve the problem of the Republic.

Desire, knowledge, and power are the three qualifications of human success. In which of these are the people, as members of large political constituencies, lacking, that they make so great a failure? Surely not in the first; for everybody wants good government. Is it skill that they need? or power? Do they know no better? or, by cause of some impediment, can they do no better? Are they blind? or are they bound? They are in fact both blind and bound. Let us consider these disabilities in turn.

In the first place,

The Intelligence of the Average Voter is Entirely Unequal to the Proper Selection of the Functionaries of Large Constituencies.

To vote intelligently we must know not only whom we are voting for, but what we are voting about:—we must have both some acquaintance with the man, and some understanding of the business that it is proposed to set him at. Either of these qualifications wanting, a good selection of our rulers at the ballot-box must be, at best, mere matter of chance.

Now in the case of towns and such like constituencies this sufficient knowledge, in both of its branches, is universally obtained. The voter both understands what the town clerk, selectman, overseer of the poor, school committee-man, or path-master will have to do, and is well informed—either by personal intercourse or by that neighborhood repute which is even a safer guide—about the fitness

of A or B to do it. Thus it happens that in these narrow precincts of democratic rule the man of character, discretion, and authoritative mien is made moderator of the popular assembly, the exact man town clerk, the upright man justice of the peace, and so on through the whole list of civil functions; and this is the reason why the affairs of towns, villages, school districts, and boroughs have ever been well managed.

But in wide constituencies, on the other hand, neither branch of this intelligence is either actual or possible. In at least nine cases out of ten, the people are substantially ignorant both of the qualities of the candidate whom they vote for, and of the business he is to undertake.

As to the men themselves whom we elect to the State Senate, or the federal House of Representatives, to a governorship, or to the charge of prisons or canals, we most often know almost nothing. I have probably much better information of this sort than most of my neighbors, but at a recent State election (when no Governor was to be chosen) not a name was on the ticket of either party that I had ever heard of before. The two candidates for the State Senate in my own senatorial district, for example, were as much unknown to me as though they lived in Japan. Even the wretched instruction of the newspaper reporter, and the mushroom repute that the arts of politicians can so quickly raise, were lacking for my guidance. The cast of a die was as good a law as I had to go by in choosing the one or the other.

But information about candidates is not our only lack in such cases. We are about equally ignorant of the business that is to be committed to their charge. The average voter has neither capacity nor opportunity for intelligent judgment about the currency or the silver question, about free trade, Indian policy, the management of public works, criminal law, municipal construction, or any other of the many difficult inquiries that now constantly await solution. This is why the people seldom know whether or not a public man has served them well, and often, accordingly, pay him neither due gratitude for worthy, nor proper condemnation for unworthy, deeds.

In view of this undeniable and inevitable ignorance of the great body of voters as to both men and measures in the political business of all large constituencies, the proposition of a member of the New York Constitutional Convention of 1846 to draw public functionaries by lot, in copy of a groping idea of the French Revolution, looks not so absurd.

Illustration in the Election of the Judiciary by the People.

The foregoing argument is forcibly confirmed by the instance of the sort of judges, as compared with other representatives of large constituencies, that popular election produces. In no other of its larger fields does democratic choice work as well as in this. But the fact is indisputable. No man can deny that the higher judges of the State of New York are far

better qualified for their station than are her legislators, her executive functionaries, her representatives at Washington, or her municipal councillors. We put plenty of nincompoops at other business, but we seldom put other than good lawyers upon the bench. The reason is not far to seek. It is, in sum, that popular opinion has better means of guidance in the election of judges than it has anywhere else. For, in the first place, every voter comprehends that a judge should be an expert in the law. This narrows the circle of possible candidates, not only to lawyers, but to lawyers of experience. In the next place, lawyers are better known to the people than any other class of men. They are constantly submitted to public scrutiny in the court-house, a place attractive to everybody, and where imposition has less chance than anywhere else on earth. The conversations of the court-house, the discussions of the jury-room, and even the shrugs of the members of the bar, assist the voter's judgment. This is why Political Organization seldom dares to set up unfit candidates for the judiciary, saving it somewhat from the degradation and disrespect that attend every other department of public administration.

*The General Will in Large Constituencies is Impotent
without Organizers.*

But this lack of popular intelligence is not by any means the chief difficulty of democracy as now constructed in large constituencies. It is not only

impossible for us to act intelligently, but it is out of the question for us to act at all, to any effect, without the help of agents in the selection of candidates for office, even though each voter may know whom and what he wants. There must be go-betweens to bring opinions and purposes together. The individual vote is but a chaotic atom unless it be cast in concert with others. To secure this, previous intercommunication, combination, and compromise are necessary. Not otherwise can the major popular will be developed and empowered. In towns, boroughs, and other small communities all this comes about spontaneously, by means of neighborhood intercourse and acquaintance, and at the town meeting. In these little camps of democracy the rank and file are thus all capable of themselves, needing neither commanding officer, adjutant, nor headquarters. But when a city, or the populous ward of a city, a congressional district, a county, or a state comes to choose its functionaries, the case is far different. No development or adjustment of opinion, nor concert of action at the polls, such as alone will enable voters of the same general way of thinking to exert their proper strength, is any way possible without special attention being given to the matter by somebody.

Take the instance of a congressional district: Here are fifteen or twenty thousand voters, scattered over hundreds, or, often, thousands of square miles, and with no occasion or opportunity for general intercourse; or, worse still, piled together in some crowded city, where a man seldom knows his

next-door neighbor even by name, or speaks from one election to another with half a dozen out of the multitude with whom he is to co-operate at the polls—how in these cases can spontaneously come about such comparison of views, harmonization of purposes, and concert of action as are needed to enable the will of the majority to find substantial expression? Let those who claim that our present system of elections is either sound or democratic, answer this question.

In the case of larger constituencies the argument is still more convincing. The constitution of the State says: "Voters, make your selection for Governor." This is but to call us to play a farce; for almost never is there a citizen whose superior fitness for that office is so widely recognized that the majority of the people would spontaneously vote for him; and, till the majority somehow come together, democracy is in the lurch. Plenty of aspirants to the place there always will be, each with a following of friends and admirers; but there is now no way, outside of Party Organization, of estimating the comparative support of each, and thus settling who ought to step back. Even when a major preference exists it has now no way of arriving at self-consciousness, or of leading its scattered forces to victory. Thus some smiling demagogue, or howling fanatic, just then upon the stage, would most likely receive a larger plurality of votes than any among the worthiest citizens.

The present arrangement for choosing a President is even more ridiculous in this regard. The letter

of the law intends that each voter should select one man in each congressional district of his State, and two for the State at large, to represent him in this important business. Now, aside from the fact that not one voter in ten thousand is capable of discharging this duty decently well on his own knowledge and judgment, it is too plain to need argument that the main popular will, or anything near it, could never reach expression in that way. If each voter were actually left, as the law leaves him, to fix his own ticket for Presidential Electors in any State, what a pretty muss would democracy be in! There are no two men in the State of New York that would vote together, nor a single congressional district where any citizen would have a decent plurality of voices.

The Three Frauds of our Present System of Elections.

In fine, I bring against the plan of direct popular election in large constituencies the accusation that it involves three lies. It supposes (1) that the elector knows whom he is voting for, (2) that he comprehends what he is voting about, and (3) that his vote will have its proper weight without preliminary consultation and arrangement with other voters; each of which assumptions in the vast majority of cases is absolutely false. The present actual fact is, that, *at the dictate of leaders whom we have not chosen, we vote for candidates whom we do not know, to discharge duties that we cannot understand.* Thus our system huddles in its bosom as many falsehoods as Cæsarism, communism, and Bourbonism altogether. If good government can

stand on such a tripod, then truth itself will prove a liar; if the science of politics have nothing better than this to offer, then let it forever hold its peace. Here is the bad mechanism, the rotten spot, the causing cause, heretofore unproclaimed, at least with any loud distinctness, in search of which we set out. Here is the fountain—let patriotism mark the statement, and logic dispute it if it dare—of all our woes. Surely it is an ample source.

The special influence of each of these fallacies varies with different cases, though never in any large constituency is it lacking, however obscured it may be to the common view by superficial mixed phenomena. For a single example: The voters in a ward of some small city, like Yonkers or Richmond, know pretty well what citizens are fittest for aldermen, and have a fair idea of what an alderman has to do, so that there is no serious lack of competency about either "men" or "measures." But the special difficulty in such cases is, that there is no way for the majority, or any considerable portion of them, to unite upon candidates at the polls without some means of collecting their opinions and organizing their strength,—which our present constitutions fail to provide.

It is in this latter defect of our present system of elections that Political Organization takes its root. The people's necessity is the politician's opportunity. The Party Organizer is no mere interloper. His aid is invoked by democracy itself as now constructed. The machinery of our present politics supplies a want. It is more a growth than a device;

rather a rally of nature than an exploit of art. Its paternity has been laid to the Albany Regency, but that distinguished cabal was at best but its foster-parent,—as the domestic bird sometimes warms into life the embryo king of the air. The absolute impotence of the general will, under our present system of elections, of itself to unite upon its functionaries in large constituencies, creates that vacuum which nature abhors, and a supplementary agency, as spontaneous as irresistible, has poured in to fill the void.

In short, our written system of elections has utterly broken down. The power of choosing public servants, which, by the intentions of the founders of our institutions and the letter of the law, is given to the people at large, has escaped from them. Two organized bands of active, intriguing, and self-seeking politicians, comprising less than one-hundredth part of the whole voting population, dispute with each other, and one of them obtains the *selection*—mark the pregnant meaning of the word—of every public functionary. That is, each of these two oligarchies nominates its candidates, and all that is left to the great mass of the people is to take its choice between them. Not seldom, indeed, a single man dominates, in effect, the political life of a whole city, a county, or a State, or may even select his favorite for the chief magistracy of the nation.

*The Misbehavior of our Present System not
Anticipated.*

That the founders of the Republic did not foresee this ill-demeanor of their plan of democracy is no

way strange. Large popular constituencies were unknown to them. They had no cities of much size. Only in two of the smallest of the Colonies — Rhode Island and Connecticut—was the chief magistrate elected by the people. All other high functionaries, such as councillors and judges, were everywhere appointed by the crown, the proprietor, or the governor. In towns, school districts, parishes, and boroughs alone had direct general suffrage had much trial. Here its results left nothing to be desired. Most natural was it, therefore, when the people attained to independence, to extend the method to wider spaces. The way that had led to a good choice of constables and selectmen would suffice, it was innocently thought, to choose members of Congress and governors by. But it was forgotten that the principles of construction that answer to bridge a streamlet may break down when a river is to be spanned. It has indisputably turned out that the method of popular election that did so well, and still does so well as applied to small communities and their simple concerns, is utterly incompetent in the wider fields to which it has been extended. We have, in a sense, outgrown our clothes.

Political Society in the Early Period of the Republic.

But why, it may be asked, were we so long free from the tyranny of Political Organizations, if, as is argued here, they are a native product of the situation? The answer is, that down to about the time of Monroe the American people were substantially

under personal leadership. Colonial society had been profoundly and pervasively impregnated with the principle of aristocracy. History, the traditions of the mother country, and the existing methods of government, all sustained the law of subordination in politics. Virginia and Connecticut were hardly less oligarchic, in sentiment and practice, than Norfolk and Devon. Opinion had its sampler from headquarters, and policy its laying-out. None but men of mark and standing aspired to public place.

Political equality, it should be remembered, was then practically unknown in every part of the world. It was but the echo of distant history, the dream of closet speculation, or the vague yearning of instinct or sympathy. Accordingly, in none of the first State constitutions was suffrage made universal, even for the whites. On the contrary, in South Carolina, Virginia, Rhode Island, and many others of the new-born independencies, it was quite narrowly restricted; and in New York it was far from complete down to fifty years ago. Meantime, the institution of slavery in half of the nation furnished an example of the political subjection of one class of men to another that could but strengthen the principle of aristocracy among the ruling race. Thus the "white trash" at the South were as much cyphers politically as the negroes themselves.

The authority of the few over the many was not diminished, but rather augmented, by the events of the Revolution. That great political movement, like nigh every other of much account that history reports, was the issue and ward of a few superior

spirits, most of whom were already prominent on the public stage, and therefore the more readily attracted the support of the people. The success of their bold undertaking gave new vigor to their influence and crown to their authority, and while their generation lasted they maintained a virtual control over the fortunes of the young Republic.

In that happy period influence was nourished by personal intercourse. In Jefferson's time and neighborhood, according to his best biographer, Mr. Parton, it was the custom of public men to keep open house for all their constituents, and to visit them in turn. Said a Northern politician of the old style to me: "When I was in public life, I knew by name and face every one of the three thousand voters in my Assembly district." Thus the chief aliment of our politics down to the time of Monroe was personal influence and personal adhesion. Even parties were formerly little more than a clanish adhesion and following. Hence, in part, the marked bitterness of party strife in those days.

To the same supreme influence of personality and position during the first half-century of the Republic it was in great part due that public station was somewhat customarily passed to the next in official order, as to a lawful heir. Thus President John Adams was Vice-President first; as was also Jefferson. Madison was Jefferson's Secretary of State; Monroe, Madison's; and John Quincy Adams, Monroe's. In like manner most commonly the lieutenant-governor came to be governor; the deputy, sheriff, and so on.

Change about the Time of Monroe.

But all things change. The great attendance that had nursed the Revolution and taught the nation how to walk perished in its turn. Genius is seldom propagated, nor could wealth be the monopoly of a few families while a fertile continent of soil, its solidest foundation, lay open to every occupancy. In the period of Monroe, all that stood for that strong authority of nature's chiefs which at the beginning of the century gave law to the young Republic was a sort of bureaucracy, composed of inferior or degenerate stock, spiritless or decrepit. The inheritance of power had lapsed, and all political attachments were loosened from the minds of men. Meanwhile, beyond the Alleghanies, was gathering a vast multitude who had "never known Joseph," and who looked for a new dispensation. The old king was dying, but the new was not yet alive.

This was the famed "Era of good feeling." A calm pervaded the political sky. Thus nature rests herself when she prepares a new birth. From this still peace, like some magnetic crystal from a neutral and quiet menstruum, issued the genius of Political Organization.

Rise of Political Organization.

The need of some agency, unprovided for by law or constitution, whereby the scattered purposes of the people might be centred and given direction at the polls, seems first to have been distinctly felt in the matter of electing a successor to Monroe. Down to that time the Presidency had been as it

were inherited, the Vice-President or else the head of the cabinet stepping into the shoes of the retiring chief. But with the disappearance from the stage of the heroes of the Revolution, this simple order of things naturally promised to come to an end. Competitors were appearing from all sides. To settle the matter congressional party caucuses were held and Presidential candidates nominated. About the same time State officers came to be proposed in like manner by legislative caucuses. And the candidates so proposed actually gathered the votes of their respective parties.

But the spirit of American democracy could not long be satisfied that a close corporation, like Congress, should initiate and direct its course in the vast and various career that was before it. Besides, the land was full of ambitious men who desired to compete for the preferments that now lay vacant. They revolted against the dictation of capitol. Their strength was at home, and they demanded that nominations for office should originate there. This only was fair to them, and fair to the people at large.

But how, in large constituencies, could popular sentiment be sounded, or express itself? Obviously the body of a party, and still more of the whole people, could not all gather in person at one place to settle upon a candidate for governor, member of Congress, or county sheriff. A delegation of authority must therefore be resorted to. Democracy must be divided into sections narrow enough for the actual assemblage of voters in conference, or caucus, for the

selection of deputies to act for them in a nominating convention. The minor civil divisions of the country, such as towns, wards, and boroughs, furnished facilities to hand for this requisite distribution and integration of democratic authority. In the cases where a delegation from each of these narrow precincts would make an unwieldy body, or when on account of distance it would be difficult for them all to attend, as in the case of a State or a Presidential nomination, this delegated power evidently had need to be still further delegated. Accordingly, in the State of New York for example, the delegates of the popular caucus meet by Assembly districts to elect delegates to a State convention, which convention in turn appoints a delegation to the Presidential convention.

Thus we see that the Party Organizations that now control the life of the Republic are founded on three principles, or axioms, of common sense,—axioms always employed in like situations in other business, but entirely lacking in our present system of elections: which fully explains why in effect the “ machine ” has been substituted for the constitution and the law in the vital matter of *selecting* our rulers.

These principles are so fundamental in character and so imperative in their operation as to demand the most earnest consideration. They are as follows:

I. When a number of men are in pursuit of a common object, such as the choice of a public officer or representative

of any kind, it is absolutely essential to the right accomplishment of their purpose that they meet together in actual and orderly conference.

II. When the number is too great for such personal assembly of them all, as in the selection of a governor, or mayor, or alderman, it is then equally necessary that they be divided into squads or companies of size suitable for such conference, whose chosen delegates shall carry to its accomplishment the common will.

III. And where these primary delegates are too numerous for free, calm, and full consultation together, as in the selection of a governor or the mayor of a great city, they must for that purpose be assembled by counties, or other minor civil division, and appoint delegates of a higher grade, who, gathered in convention, shall select and appoint such high functionary or functionaries.

This is a short account of the *raison d'être* of Political Organization. That it spread like wildfire over all the free North and West is matter of history, and the simple reason was, that everybody saw that in no other way could the people be empowered in constituencies too large and populous for a single orderly assembly.

In accordance with the principles defined above, "the machine" has two essential factors, the Caucus, and the Convention, in its several grades. To these was soon added, in accordance with business methods, the party Committee, which makes organization continuous, keeps its records, and serves largely as its executive and managing officer. What are called Politicians are the engineers and conductors of this great business. My argument requires some account of them all.

The Caucus.

The Caucus is the germ of our political life, and, like the cell of physiology, bears within itself all the properties of the final structure. And as, in the animal frame, this elementary assemblage of vital forces may prove the mother of healthy tissue or of horrid cancer, so in the body politic, while the gathering of the people for consultation and co-operation is the very birthplace of true democracy, the party Caucus that stands for it now has wholly lost its native purpose, becoming either the mere arena of personal rivalries, or scene of passive obedience to a higher authority.

There are three stages in the story of the Caucus: First, a true conference of the people; next, a field of rivalry for local ambitions; and now the mere tool of the machine, its purposes directed from distant headquarters, at Albany, or even from the capitol of the nation. In its origin, as I have already intimated, it was far more an instinct of the people than a contrivance of politicians. It was in fact but a sort of volunteer town meeting. But the men with political ambition soon discovered that here they must take their start. Governed by no legal authority, intrigue, activity, over-reaching, and every form of fraud had here free scope. Well do I remember the first Caucus that I ever attended, now many years ago, when this institution was in the middle stage of its historic evolution, and while, no longer a free expression of the general will, it had not yet become a mere attachment of the great party machine. My innocent purpose was to help

secure a better officering of my ward, and, perhaps, of the city at large. Arrived at the appointed hour in a dimly lighted and ill-smelling room, I found the Caucus already organized, with an expert of politics in the chair. A miscellaneous raft of people was in attendance, but with hardly one substantial citizen among them. Tellers were chosen, or appointed, and, before an unprepared voter could think what to do, the hat was turned, the votes counted, and the result announced.

Some years later I was desirous of being made School Commissioner, with a view to help improve public education in quality and abate its cost. The undertaking looked the more feasible because the Commission had been constructed with a special view to escape the influence of partisan politics. Besides, I was a taxpayer, and an old resident of respectability, had quite a drove of children to educate, and was known to be a man of some schooling myself. I spoke to a number of my neighbors about it, who all agreed that I was the very sort of man they wanted for the office. I looked upon myself as already as good as nominated; and, the way things were situated, nomination was equivalent to election. But when I got to the Caucus, I found a ring of men, each with his clique of personal friends and dependents, already surrounding and engrossing the polls,—one of whom had books and stationery to sell to the Board of Education, another desks, furnaces, or other furniture for schoolhouses, another fuel, and so on, and who had already arranged among themselves which of them should be the nominee.

The result was that we got a man who had neither children, property, education, nor public esteem. In not one of the Caucuses that I have ever attended has there been a fair and full expression of the popular will, but always sinister preparation and sinister methods. Even when, as sometimes in rural regions, the Caucus is still conducted honestly, it is almost never an unembarrassed consultation where general opinion asserts itself, but a mere arena for the rival efforts of aspirants to office. Even the "good names" that are frequently put on the ticket of delegates to "strengthen" it, most often turn out to be merely the representatives of a candidate, a clique, or a special interest.

Since then, the same precinct has ceased to be the field of personal rivalry to become the mere appendage of an authority that resides partly at Albany and partly at Washington. The Caucus in all our cities, and very commonly elsewhere in contestable States, is now conducted with a good deal of regularity. Particularly is this the case in the States where the legislature has recognized party organization as a part of our system of elections. All the same, it remains the mere instrument of politicians, organized and conducted by the local leaders, and participated in by not more, on the average, than one tenth of the voters. The right man is always on hand, with a "regular" ticket of delegates, and this is customarily voted as a matter of course, contested Caucuses constantly growing more and more rare.

The delegates of the Caucus constitute the Convention, either directly or by further delegation.

This is now the root of all high political empire. It is here that legislative, judicial, and executive officers are in effect appointed, and public policy and administration marked out. Here, accordingly, politicians gather, personally or by deputy; for to have a seat in the Convention is a certificate of party power that will bring profit some day, if not immediately. Sometimes at the Caucuses an aspirant to office has obtained a clear majority of friendly delegates, in which case the business of the Convention is but to record the victory; but more often, especially in the grades of Convention more removed from the people, the profits of politics still remain to be contended for. Then a market is opened that beats Wall Street and Chatham Row. Every public interest and every personal influence or ambition has here its value, to buy, or sell, or swap; only the public has no weight. To cheat brings no imputation, but only to be cheated. High prices are not uncommon in this mart. By credible accounts, as much as one hundred thousand dollars has been paid to get nominated by the Convention of the dominant party for Clerk, Register, or Sheriff of the County of New York; half that sum for Treasurer of Pennsylvania, and, in proportion to their opportunities, for other the like offices all over the country. A seat on the supreme judicial bench costs from five to fifteen thousand dollars. A nomination to Congress from the lean pastures of Vermont or New Hampshire can sometimes be had for a thousand dollars, but in the golden fields of California and Nevada it has cost fifty thousand.

Not only are elective offices bought and sold in the Convention, but here also, in effect, politicians divide among themselves diplomacy, cabinet appointments, the supervision of banking, insurance, education, public charities, and public health. Here too the charge of the public moneys is bestowed, the rich mine of the canal staked off, and the settlement of public jobs substantially agreed upon. Here gather also they who look to legislation to advance their interests, by tariff, bounty, subsidy, appropriation, or altered tax.

The Committee.

Political Organization is kept alive from election to election by the Party Committee. In the smaller civil divisions, such as towns and wards, this agency is established by the Caucus; in the larger, by the Convention in its various grades and spheres. In view of its important duties, the Committee is always made up of men of consideration in the party, and of experience in politics. It fixes the time and place for the Caucus and the Convention, and has the initiative in organizing them. It levies assessments on office-holders and contractors, actual or expectant, and disburses the proceeds. It belongs to it to manage the press, to encourage or repress individual aspirations, to reconcile factions, and oversee the campaign. Its endorsement carries great weight in the councils of the party, and not seldom determines the distribution of political power and profit. Besides, the Committee-man is himself in the line of promotion, as entitled to reward from Political

Organization for services in its behalf. There is no surer entry to successful political life than to get to be a member of the Committee.

The Platform

must also be mentioned as an important instrument in Party Organization. Like a creed in religion, it serves both as a flag and a spell. Investigators in physiology tell us that if you take a hen and give her neck a disconcerting twist, and then draw a chalk mark before her eyes, that conspicuous sign becomes the cynosure of her attention, and renders the poor thing passive in your hands. Something thus it is that no small share of voters, with minds half emotional and half mechanical, are dazzled and enslaved by the Platform that politicians set before them. To make it the more influential, as seeming to the people to be their own voice, each latest phase or fashion of popular impulse or opinion, however unjust, superficial, or transitory,—such as Government Money, "The Dollar of our Fathers," Labor Reform, Woman Suffrage, Grangerdom, and public improvements that shall make every farm a village and every village a city,—is given a place, at least upon its edge.

Such is the essential framework of Political Organization. But it has a thousand accessory constructions—a secret service, a power behind the throne, wheels within wheels. The lobby, at Washington, at every State capitol, and every city hall, is its legitimate progeny and its help. Rings of contractors, Rings to raise the fees of sheriffs, county

treasurers, or surrogates, and the uncounted other foul alliances of self-seeking that are so constantly formed to rob the people in every department of the public business, are part and parcel of this domination.

Politicians.

The politicians that manage this business are of several grades and many sorts, from the "boss" to the "heeler," from the "distinguished fellow-citizen" to the corner lounge. One kind gathers the Caucus, another regulates it, and another uses it. Some go to the Convention to buy, and some to be bought. There is the horse-shed politician of the country, and the corner-grocery politician of the city; the politician of the executive anteroom, and the politician of the legislative lobby; he who bribes an election clerk with money, and he who seduces him with promises. There is the cajoler of the people and the attorney of corporations, the raving partisan,—though never too heady for any profitable arrangement,—the hired editor, the false philanthropist,—appropriating what he was entrusted to dispense,—and, finally, the self-styled "scientist," who, mounted on the toad-stool of current opinion, watches, like a toad, for some savory morsel to come within the reach of his glib tongue. The perfect type of the American politician is a mixture of the demagogue, the intriguer, and the jobber; flattering the people, locking arms with every surrounding influence, and all the while looking out for himself.

That the more prominent and influential politicians

are for the most part respectable citizens is by no means denied. Not a few of them deservedly stand high in the esteem of their neighbors. But the bulk of them, high or low, are a bad lot. The business is in itself corrupting. And besides, no man can enter the guild of politicians except by their consent and through approaches where fraud is head gatekeeper. With these he must make alliance, and here must he leave his pledge. Entered, all the surroundings favor his corruption, and no common man, however pure before, can resist them. A decent gratitude compels him to repay with favor whoever has aided him. Besides, he can meet unscrupulous adversaries only with unscrupulous weapons. This contagion, obligation, and necessity of our present politics brings men to infamy who under a better star would leave to their children an untarnished name.

The Machinery of Political Organization has now reached great perfection. It is suited to every situation, and equal to every emergency. So long ago as fifty years it sufficed to hold together the mass of the old Whig party under a change of principles nigh as utter as its change of name. At the present time its construction is so exact that like the ready-made houses which Chicago carpenters sent out to settlers on the prairie, it is carried into every new territory and reconstructed State, and set up by federal officials and political adventurers, between sun and sun. Thus has the infancy of Nevada, Colorado, and the rest been scarred as by an inherited pox.

Allies of Political Organization.

Three auxiliaries have raised Political Organization to its present pitch of power, and now sustain it there.

The first of them is

The Spoils.

The public expenditure is the nursing-bottle of our politics. Political Organization, as Napoleon said of armies, travels on its belly. Its power has matured *pari passu* with the extension of the rule that "to the victors belong the spoils."

The amount of political spoil has become enormous. Said Thomas H. Benton: "The patronage of the federal government at the beginning was founded on a revenue of two million dollars. It is now operating on twenty-two million, and within the lifetime of many now living must operate on fifty million." Those who heard this prophecy are not yet all dead, but already that patronage operates on ten times the predicted sum. Equally rapid has been the augment of this influence in municipalities, and other minor spheres of government. In all its relations, government in this country now takes in and pays out about a billion of money yearly. It is true that perhaps one third of the sum goes to pay pensions and the interest on public debts, but there is not a dollar of it but what in its collection or disbursement, or in both, leaves some percentage, by way of salary, fees, commissions, advantages, or opportunities, in the hands of politicians. The rest

of this enormous expenditure is in great part their mere patrimony and nourishment. It certainly is not an exaggerated estimate, that the immediate profits of political rule equal a fourth part of the whole public revenues. Thus the average householder is taxed above fifteen dollars a year—to grease the axles and fuel the boiler of the party machines.

To these immediate spoils is to be added a great share of the enormous value of land grants, steamboat subsidies and other bounties, and of innumerable rich franchises and advantageous charters about ferries, street and other railroads, railroad bridges, gas companies, savings banks, and a thousand other like interests and opportunities that are now more or less preferentially bestowed by legislatures and other political authorities. Add also to these legalized gains the unlawful profits that are pocketed by lobbies and rings, strikers and blackmailers, the favored referees of political judges, the venal examiners of banks and insurance companies, double-dealing detectives, the false guardians of the revenues at the custom-house, the distillery, and the tobacco factory, and many more the like. To rightly estimate what these amount to, we must remember how enormously in modern times—by the extension of commerce, the increased magnitude of public works, the growing diversity of corporate undertakings, and other such matters—the volume of values that are more or less dependent on the conscience of government officials has been augmented.

Nor is this all; no small part of the general capital and occupation of the country hangs on the action of legislatures, offering great profit to those in political control. Uncounted millions obey the navigation and the excise laws, for example, and as many the tariff. Who can count the revenue that politicians in and out of Congress, foreknowing or preparing the action of government, have got through changes in the tax on whiskey and tobacco? Or, to take the case of protection to home industries, it is safe to say,—without discussing the philosophy of the system, or whether the money comes from the pocket of denizens or foreigners,—that thousands of fortunes are now in hands where they would never be under the policy of free trade. Great cities owe their growth and very existence to the tariff.

The next great auxiliary of Political Organization is the

Power in Office.

The number of men in the pay of the federal government alone is now about half a million; and States, counties, and cities altogether must furnish as many more. The taxpayers of New York City number less than three hundred thousand; its corporate employees over thirty thousand. The registration of 1898 shows 555,870 voters. So, more than one voter in twenty is an office-holder, and is dependent for his place on Political Organization.

All these must serve their great creator. Formerly

it was viewed as unbecoming for a man in public station to meddle with the Caucus and the Convention, or to do more at the polls than drop a silent vote. But now the office-holder is the most active of all in the political arena. Lack of skill, attention, or integrity in official duty may be overlooked, but never dereliction here.

Out of the income of each officer, from a member of the federal cabinet to the tipstaff of a police court, must be handed over a good percentage to carry on the party campaign. In Presidential contests our foreign ministers and consuls have been systematically and openly assessed by the Central Republican Committee in aid of the party in power. The system is so well established as to have become a commonplace. Its operations have grown somewhat restrained in becoming universal. Some of its earlier exhibitions were more striking. So, in the campaign of 1876, national banks throughout the land were called on to hand over, and did hand over, each its quatum. It appeared in the Credit Mobilier investigation that a Vice-President regularly sent a thousand dollars to the aid of Party Organization in Indiana. That the sum turned out to just equal an instalment of gratitude or prudence from a post-office contractor to that influential functionary, regularly paid, only adds to the instruction of the incident.

Thus the public treasury is the paymaster of Political Organization; and thus democracy, as now constructed, but "wings the shaft that quivers in its heart."

The Press

is the third ally of Political Organization. This modern creation owns all the faculties of ancient fable; a hundred hands, uncounted eyes, untiring strength, immortal youth. It adds to these the illusion of the ventriloquist;—when it speaks we seem to hear the people speak, forgetting that its words issue from its own belly. The newspaper is the familiar of every fireside, and furnishes more than half our reading. It is therefore the master of reputation both for persons and ideas. To possess its favor is to be called great and good; to lack it, oblivion at the best. This tremendous engine, once looked upon as the chief security of freedom, has now become in an enormous degree, as demagogue and party priest, the instrument of our enslavement. Political Organizations, observing its power, have taken it into their employ, till now the number of public journals in the country that they do not control may almost be counted on the fingers. Especially have they seduced this daughter of liberty to be their mistress by bestowing upon her great part of the many sinecures and easy berths in the public service. Incredible sums are wasted in unnecessary and extravagant printing for the support and subjugation of the press. The pay-roll of Tweed & Co. contained the names of eighty-nine of the newspapers of the city of New York—hardly three righteous being left. From 1867 to 1871 official printing and advertising cost the taxpayers there above a million dollars a year, while for all proper purposes a tenth of the sum was ample. And yet

the ring of plunderers was broken, it is said, because it did not pay editors enough to suppress the exposure of its transactions. It is notorious that at Albany, Harrisburg, Columbus, Indianapolis, and other State capitals, political patronage has always been a mine of wealth to party journals.

To these official subsidies are to be added the purse of the party out of office, and the personal patronage and douceurs of political aspirants. With this and with that it is no slander to say that the great body of newspaperdom is to-day the servitor of Political Organization.

The Mightiness of Political Organization.

Thus based on a deep necessity of democracy that our present method of elections leaves unsupplied, and buttressed round by great supports that strengthen with time, Political Organization has become the master of our career. What started to be a tender has become the flagship. Aimed at first to collect and empower the will of the people, it now has a will of its own. It is no longer the herald, but the prince himself. The citizens of New York or Oswego are not so subject to its police as they are to the Caucus and Convention. It was not the individuals, Tweed, Conolly, and Hall, that held an imperial city in their grip, exchanged embassies with the State capitol, and came nigh to compass the making of a President, but the genius of Political Organization working through them. Croker's domination is only a less crude development of the same power. Neither personal nor patriotic ambition

can afford to quarrel with it. To neglect the Caucus, not to seek a seat in the Convention, or to disregard the calls of the Committee, is to be a cypher in politics. Except as they wait on this, genius, experience, and devotion are of no account in public affairs.

The operations of the Tweed ring still stand as the most notorious outrage on the people through the power of Political Organization in the history of American municipalities. Since the extraordinary effort of public virtue by which it was suppressed it has, as it were, served successors of the Tweed type as a warning post of the limit to which audacity can safely go. But this lesson to the politicians is no security for the people. Reckless plundering can be detected and combated when by prudent and stealthy means the public may be robbed without giving an alarm. With all the vigilance that the motive of party rivalry, or the self-interest and public spirit combined of the virtuous section of the press and of independent citizens have kept alive, it is the common allegation and belief that the newer arts of Political Organization as exemplified by Tammany to-day in New York City are turning the people's money from public ends as never before. This great power, instructed by experience, is not checked in its development, but is only put to new devices.

The theory of our system is that the people themselves choose their rulers at the polls, but the fact is that the political organizers who make nominations at the Caucus and the Convention do it. To us is

left but one better than Hobson's choice; he could have this or none, while we must take the candidate of one party or the other, both of them often equally unworthy. At arms against the rest of the world, these combinations are privately in league with each other, resisting in concert "stump" candidates, "citizens' " tickets, public opinion, and the scrutiny of the law.

As creeping vines in tropic forests absorb the juices and crush the stems of nobler growths, so has Political Organization squeezed out the life of democracy in this country till nothing is left but crumbling fibre or an empty shell. To illustrate this point a single instance will suffice. The federal constitution contains no more plausible or approved device than the State Colleges of Presidential Electors. Designed in part to crystallize the amorphous and point the indefinite in public opinion on the larger topics of politics, its main intent was to commit the choice of the federal executive to men selected at the polls for their high intelligence and integrity; and so to shape the business that illegitimate preparation of every sort should be eliminated from this critical node in the career of the Republic. But how has that purpose now failed! The people have absolutely nothing to do with the selection of Presidential Electors. The polls but serve to register the edicts of Political Organization.

Alarmed democracy, in legislatures and constitutional conventions, has tried many and various devices, such as minority representation, short terms of office, mixed commissions, and the like, to impede

the sway of this encroaching power, but all in vain. Reform must take a deeper hold.

Political Organization necessarily Self-Seeking.

The Caucus and Convention, as has been already pointed out, were of virtuous parentage, and their early history accordingly presents nothing discreditable. It has been the unanimous testimony of men engaged in politics before the middle of this century that these bodies were then honestly constituted, organized, and conducted, and that the nominations that they made were a substantial expression of the general will. But now, from a spontaneous impulse and arrangement of the voters, Political Organization has become little more than a conspiracy of self-seekers.

This disastrous and foreboding change is not difficult to account for. As time went on it was found that the gathering of the Caucus and Convention, and the making Party Organization continuous from year to year through the Committee, and effective at the polls, necessarily involved the expenditure of much money, time, and toil. What with the hire of a polling place for a Caucus, a hall for the Convention, and headquarter-rooms for the Committee; the cost of the printing and distribution of tickets, circulars, and other advertising, of watchmen and attorneys to guard and further party interests at the polls; of messengers and livery to bring laggards along, of speakers and a thousand other necessities, the mere money expenditures in conducting a

political campaign in any large constituency are of great magnitude. In a Presidential contest they count up among the millions. The personal attention, industry, and skill involved are of corresponding proportions.

Now, it is not in average human nature to toil or spend without the reasonable prospect of a *quid pro quo*. But no such inducement to take a busy and expensive part in the conduct of politics reaches the average citizen, unless in some rare emergency. The strongest interest that the voter ordinarily feels or has in the public business is about taxation; but to try to make a saving there by going into politics would be, he well knows, to save at the spigot and waste at the bung-hole. It would necessarily cost him ten times his stake, with the chances ten to one that he would be cast after all. Neither because he thinks that the education of his children in the public schools is badly managed, or that the alderman or congressman that represents him is incapable, or that any other such evil is going on, will he wish, or can he afford, to incur the expense, fatigue, and harassment of traversing his county, ward, or district, to awaken, instruct, and incite public opinion, and to gather the Caucus and arrange the Convention for the selection of better nominees. The busy man cannot allow the time, the lazy man the industry, the poor man the money, nor the rich man the trouble; nor will the wise man, however patriotic, be quick to undertake the difficult and thankless task. In the same regard, the honest man cannot be expected to take as much pains to guard the public

cash box as the burglar will to break into it, nor folks of sense to be as bent on keeping an ass out of the legislature as that persevering creature often is to get there.

In a word, it is only the man who looks to being made sheriff, treasurer, congressman, or collector, either now or by and by, to furnishing public supplies from his store, or getting public deposits for his bank, to having his son made a policeman, a cadet, or a deputy, or to some other of the innumerable advantages that attend political control, who has sufficient inducement to undergo the toil and meet the costs of active politics.

Here the greediness and venality of so many of our public men find, not only explanation, but some excuse. The ballot-box in large constituencies utterly fails to bestow authority on the people, and leaves it to the laborious and costly rivalry of politicians. Surely it is not strange that they who have toiled and spent should deem themselves entitled to profit and enjoy.

Add, that "what is everybody's business is nobody's," and we have a full explanation of how Political Organization is now totally in the hands of self-seekers.

It is despite this condition that we are far from being badly off in this blessed country; as nations have fared under various kinds of government. In the first place, our happy state in its most substantial features depends less on legislation and the current conduct of affairs than on the principles and methods embodied in the federal and State

constitutions. No great wrong can happen to life, liberty, or property while Jefferson's bill of rights is embodied there. Next, such important features of our policy as common schools, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, the restraint of spirits drinking, and the like were either fixed before Political Organization was conceived or originated in a spontaneous impulse of the people. But the question is,—however our state may be rated as good or bad,—how far do we fail of what we are entitled to or might enjoy of the benefits of good government? What we want is men high above the common to lead the State, for true democracy is by its very nature progressive. Such men never have anything to do with the party machine, nor the machine with them.

To attempt here to draw any map of our politics or sufficient specification of the prevailing vices and in completeness of American law and administration would be idle. Some general considerations must suffice.

The Impotence of the People at Large

corresponds with the might of Political Organization. Not more subdued to a greedy priesthood was Europe before printing was invented than is democracy now in this Republic to combinations of designing politicians. That cabinets are unskilled, city councils corrupt, and legislatures ignorant, is no impeachment of democracy, for the people have nothing to do with selecting them. Surely it is not by popular contrivance or design that the charge of the commonwealth has now become the wage of rival gangs of unscrupulous politicians.

All the struggles that from time to time the people make by non-partisan organization, reformers' tickets, and the like to escape from this thralldom are but like the vain, pitiful wriggling of worms beneath a giant's tread; and this for the following reasons:

(1) No campaign can be carried on under our present system of politics in any large constituency, as already explained, without the expenditure of much time, money, and endeavor. The mere getting up through Caucuses and Conventions of a ticket of candidates, putting it before the people, explaining its intent, defending it against wrong assault, and promoting it at the polls is a costly and arduous job. In doing such work, organizations of politicians are stimulated and aided by the plenitude of the public purse, *in esse* or *in posse*, by the vigor of office and contract seeking, and by all the other sinister ambitions that look to politics for help; while scattered patriotism has nothing to depend on but confused general purpose, hesitating efforts, and scanty and uncertain material aid.

(2) The general will can be of but little avail against the existing powers of politics until it shall possess itself of the matured and wide-reaching faculties which they enjoy. Impulse can never compete with system in the long run, individuality with co-operation, nor youth with inveteracy. Not till the loose purposes and undertakings of the people are somehow grown together, as those of politicians now are, can they act for themselves. If everybody should go to the Caucus, as we are so loudly exhorted to do, the action of that body, as

it is now shaped, would still obey the concert of self-seeking politicians.

(3) They who from patriotic motives may undertake to break our bondage to Party Organizers must constantly lack the wide acquaintance, the intimacy with popular opinions and prejudices, and the practice of management with its resulting skill, that they acquire who make politics their trade. This is why years ago an assembly of the best citizens of Chicago, spurred to uncommon effort by the unexampled calamity of her conflagration, found themselves utterly incapable of getting up a "citizens' " ticket for municipal officers to help meet the emergency that would have any chance of success till they called to their aid the skill of leading politicians in the two parties, and made nominations in accordance with their suggestions.

(4) Finally, the people can seldom be sure that a so-called "taxpayers'," "no-party," or "citizens' " ticket is any better than the rest. Not all of them who cry "Reform! Reform!" are really reformers,—as the famous "Committee of Seventy" in New York had reason to know, when they found their own ranks infested with the very sort of vermin of which they were trying to rid the administration of the city. It is notorious that about as often as otherwise such undertakings are engineered by office-seekers and traders in politics.

Abstention of the People from Politics.

Their impotence thus becoming apparent, the great body of citizens, especially of the better sort,

now seldom attend Caucuses, leaving them to the charge of rival office-seekers and their friends and office-holders and their dependents. Says a Chicago newspaper: "At the primary meetings this year to select delegates to nominate candidates for Congress, county officers, and members of the State legislature, not more than sixteen thousand votes were polled"—this in a city of at least one hundred and sixty thousand lawful voters—"and of these one-half were confessedly repeaters and fraudulent, many notoriously doing service for both parties. There is a force in this city of about ten thousand men, who are professional attendants at primaries, and who are hired regularly every year to nominate certain candidates." This is a fair sample of what obtains in every city.

The Best Men are Fast Disappearing from Public Life.

There is no municipal council or State legislature that is now composed of the most able and respected citizens. Scant, surely, is now the supply of statesmen at either end of Pennsylvania Avenue. A foggy nebula has supplanted those bright stars which once sprinkled thick the political sky and rained influence on all the nation. Look at the Senate! In the scales of Political Organization that now determine who shall fill every public place, nothing but money, popular availability, the claims of party service, and the favor of official power has much weight. Poised against these, character, intelligence, and integrity kick high the beam. Patriotism has been crowded

away by self-seeking, honor by sordidness, and statesmanship by intrigue and activity. Positions of the highest trust and distinction, such as should crown a lifetime of noble endeavor, have become the prize of cunning and impudence. Fitness is now hardly a qualification for public place, but rather a disqualification. "I was thought of," says Figaro, "for a government appointment; but, unfortunately, I was fit for it; an arithmetician was wanted, a dancer got it." The story of political preferment in this country at the present time could hardly be better told.

The means and methods by which almost alone public station can now be attained are repulsive to high-minded men. Self-respect hesitates to descend to the companionship of the Caucus and the Convention; integrity scorns their devious courses, and independence refuses their slavish environment. Nor is political elevation any longer august, or capable of giving much satisfaction to a worthy ambition. If a man of qualifications arrive at a seat in some public body, he finds himself out of place in the midst of surrounding stolidity, sloth, and fraudulence. His capacity is unappreciated, and his ideas of duty laughed at. The jealousy of meaner minds, hoodwinked partisanship, the marauders and freebooters of politics, and the enterprise of a venal or sensational press, constantly assault him; and, though he may not quail before their attacks, he will hardly seek the conflict with them again.

Young Men our Rulers.

Another evil result of the present state of politics

is the commitment of the public business largely to youngsters. Gray heads are rare in our councils, and the terms "alderman" and "senator" have lost their native significance. The average age of the members of the State legislature from New York City in 1894 was less than thirty-four years. Even on the judicial bench we constantly see men who have to learn their business as they go along, like a shiftY pedagogue. This change has occurred partly because sage experience abstains with disgust from our present politics, partly because slow-growing character has no longer much foothold in that tumultuous arena, but chiefly because youth especially abounds in the stir and impudence that are essential to success under the rule of Party Organization. Thus has the steadiness of age been supplanted by the headiness of youth. But still the change, it must be allowed, is not much inconsistent with the ancient maxim, "Old men for counsel and young men for war," for our democracy is now far more a warfare than a council.

It is chiefly by the influence of politicians that party spirit, chief bane of free government, is kept alive among the people, after all reason for it has ceased. They will not let by-gones be by-gones. They rub our ears and set us on. At every election they blow hot the dying embers of social strife, and stir the competition of localities, the prejudices of race, and every other element of civil discord. To their intended sympathy with the side of the most numerous voters has been chiefly due the conflict between labor and capital that so scars our industry

and brings women and children to want. A satisfactory settlement of the important question about the sale of intoxicating drinks has little other hindrance than the interested interference of party politicians. They pat the gray mare, seductively. They get between the impulse and the goal of charity and prostitute it on the way. Education, enterprise, and every mechanic and æsthetic art are constantly brought to harm by their operations. There is, in short, no concern or affection of the people that politicians do not disturb, to its great detriment, to advance their ambition and gratify their greed.

The present debauchment of public life has begun to hurt the morals of the people themselves. Nor could it be otherwise. Great is the power of example. We reform others, it has been well said, when we ourselves walk uprightly. Government is a city set on a hill. It is the cynosure of all the country round. Its rays of influence reach to the utmost circumference of society, and penetrate its narrowest corners. In democracies, as in kingdoms, the practices of rulers are an example and a justification. There is a fashion in morals and opinions, as well as in dress, that takes its cue from headquarters: and, accordingly, in this country the tone of virtue in capitols and city halls threatens to become its tone in private life. Propriety and dignity are abashed when indecency and vulgarity sit in high places. When self-seeking is rewarded by public station, when honesty proves not to be the path of policy, and when honor loses preferment, a great

incitement to virtue is taken away, and a stimulus to unworthy ambition added.

There is no avocation that is not stained by the touch of Political Organization. The bar of New York City has been forced to gather its respectability to one side to escape the inculpation of brotherhood in political crime. My own profession has been taught to seek such important and honorable public places as that of health officer, commissioner of lunacy, coroner, and the like, not by devotion to science or humanity, but by party activity and the cultivation of political influence. Even the pulpit turns from the chastisement of the pride that sits before it, canopied with pagan magnificence, to comment on politics, and to flatter its constituency by the attribution of especial patriotism. So every form of science or skill gets a setback when preferments that belong to merit are bestowed on political pets and when humbugs in education, agriculture, and the fine arts have the approval and aid of capitols. Even our army and navy, of old the peculiar home of strong integrity, have begun, it would seem, to feel the corrupt and enervating influence of our false politics.

But of still worse omen are the lessons that are sown by the same hand in the quick minds of youth. The present is the nursery of the future. The customs of the day are the school of the rising generation, and its successful men their examples. All the fashions of our politics tend strongly to their debauchment. Already we see no end of young men of promise seduced from the paths of industry and

decent ambition into an idle and unworthy waiting on the favor of parties and politicians.

If in these things the commonwealth incur no danger, then surely it need never be alarmed; and if the spirit of civilization, progress, humanity, or whatever other high sentiment or expectation is extant, have here no accusation to make, then let them be forever silent.

Prospective Growth of the Rule of Political Organization.

This injurious mastery of bands of self-seekers over the commonwealth is not a momentary cloud darkening the political sky, nor any chance morbidity which the healing virtue of nature may be expected to purge away in due time; neither is it some imported evil germ, like communism, which the superior intelligence of the American people may safely be trusted to suppress; it is rooted in our present political life deeper than leprosy in the human frame. Some transient weakening and local breakdown it may suffer, names and platforms will change from time to time, and new hands in their generation gather the reins of power, but its general sway cannot but steadily augment in force and viciousness. Like the fierce behemoth that it is, whatever surface bruises it may suffer, its deeper thews will still expand, its joints gather oil, and its brawn resistance. Surely, if there be anything that promises to strengthen in the future, it is the Organization of self-seeking politicians under our present system of elections. What competitor shall

challenge it ? or for whom shall it step aside ? We have to balance it no artificial influence or ancient authority, such as a standing army, a State religion, the compact corporation of landowners that primogeniture keeps up, or the inherited authority of monarch or oligarchy. Will the people come to their own rescue, or can they ? It might seem to promise something in this latter behalf when a thousand taxpayers suddenly assemble, as happens now and then, to protest against rings of politicians and the unlawful and grievous burdens that they have imposed upon the people : but what can such bubbles of democracy effect ? Absolutely nothing. All such uprisings and vociferations are as vain against the strong-seated power of Political Organization as the tumultuous waves that bark at the foot of Gibraltar. The very security of this potentate is the Sahara of real democratic power in the midst of which it stands,—as oftentimes surrounding barrenness and desolation guarded the ancient cities of the East. Not till the situation to which it owes its origin is changed will Political Organization cease to strengthen itself.

But notwithstanding this incrimination of the machine, I not only admit, but most earnestly insist, that under our present system of elections, it is an absolute necessity and of infinite benefit. Were this improvisation of democratic power suddenly to give out, our condition would be as much worse than it is now as anarchy is worse than despotism. Naught but its interference saves democratic rule in populous constituencies from absolute collapse

and utter chaos. Without the help of "working" politicians our votes for governor, mayor, member of Congress, county officers, and the like would inevitably be so scattered all about that not even a decent plurality of voices, much less a majority, would ever chime. On the contrary, the apostle of some transient, narrow, and undeserving notion, like "the Dollar of our Fathers," Know-nothingism, Labor Reform, or Woman's Rights, which popular enthusiasm or alarm had suddenly lifted up, the mere demagogue of the press, the pulpit, or the stump, or the attorney of some strong moneyed corporation, would attain to power, while the mass of public opinion and interest, lacking cohesion, impulse, and even self-consciousness, would remain unrepresented and unprotected.

CHAPTER III

A TRUE ORGANIZATION OF THE PEOPLE, OR THE NATURAL METHOD OF POPULAR ELECTIONS

HAVING thus indicated the unsatisfactoriness of our present political state, and the utter insufficiency of the chief suggestions that have been heretofore made toward either its explanation or its cure, and having pretended to trace it to its original source, it remains for me to offer a logical, practicable, and effective remedy, without which complaint and criticism are but a cheap occupation.

If I have been right in laying the trouble to our election system, its remedy must obviously be sought for in an amendment of that system. Nor should the search seem hopeless, since difficulties of artificial origin ought not to be beyond the reach of art to overcome. Whatever evils law has caused surely law can cure.

Let the substance of my argument be briefly stated afresh: Noticing that, almost universally, the present prevailing method of establishing public authority by direct popular vote works well in small constituencies, and ill in large, I attribute its failure in the latter to three things: (1) To the actual and necessary ignorance of the great majority of voters both as to whom they are voting for and what they

are voting about ; (2) to their utter inability to unite, of and among themselves, upon representative candidates for office, and (3) to Organizations of Politicians, which, started to help the people in this embarrassment, have, by the logic of the situation, become their corrupt and corrupting masters.

Now, to correct these false features, it is plainly necessary somehow to bring the business of the voter within the limits (1) of his probable acquaintance with the man he votes for, (2) of his substantial comprehension of the duties that his candidate if elected will have to discharge, and (3) of his practical ability to unite with his fellows at the polls in the pursuit of a common object without calling the agency of politicians to his help. These changes, and nothing less, will clear away the three defects of our present method of elections, and set democracy on the solid ground of truth and reason.

But these objects are obviously impossible to be accomplished under the present plan of the direct election of the functionaries of large constituencies by the people themselves. It would surely be unprofitable for each neighborhood to send a representative to Congress or the State legislature. It would make these bodies inconveniently numerous, if nothing worse. Neither can the mass of us be brought well to understand the many difficult questions which the high officers of political society are constantly called on to decide. Still more impracticable is it for the majority of the people, or indeed any considerable portion of them, in Philadelphia

or Iowa, Rhode Island or Atlanta, spontaneously to unite on a candidate for mayor or governor, and combine their endeavors for his support.

By what device then, in this extremity, shall the present false relation of the voter to public authority in large constituencies be so modified as to give him his proper share in the management of the commonwealth ?

There is but one resort. *Fas est ab hoste doceri.* We must take a lesson from politicians themselves. We can break down the rule of Party Organization only by adopting its methods. Our whole political life now hinges upon an instrumentality that is unknown to written constitutions, because that instrumentality is of nature; against which all artifice is forever vain. It is the Caucus-chosen delegates, assembled in Convention, that now, in effect, appoint all our higher functionaries. We must make this Mayor of the Palace king. The people must turn over the prerogative of selecting governors and legislators, now nominally exercised at the ballot-box, to Representative Delegates. In the business of all large constituencies the Caucus and the Convention must be substituted for the Polls. Thus only can the function of the voter be accommodated to his intelligence; and thus only, the shadow of power discarded, can we secure its substance. Our system of elections has broken down because it is impracticable, and the "machine" has taken its place because its principles of construction are founded in nature and very necessity. We must accept this native order of things, and put the

people instead of volunteer politicians in charge, by writing it in the statute-book.

Finally, in order to the perfection of democracy by the installation of the people in perpetual authority, a new rule of office tenure will be proposed; a rule not incompatible with our present system of elections, nor, indeed, any way necessary to that now proposed, but, in the opinion of the writer, logical and promising much good. That rule is to make every public officer removable at the will of the power that appointed him.

Not that the "machine" is to be taken over in its entirety, but that its fundamental principles, already hereinbefore pointed out, must be made the foundation also of the new system. Aside from these, the present system of Party Organizations is full of defects. Of its minor faults, many will be remedied by the mere substitution of the stringency and exactness of statutory, for the looseness of volunteer, organization.

The greatest fault in the existing organizations' rule is their partisanship. This will be cured, with all its vicious appendages, by simply taking no notice of parties in the organization of the primary. In that is centred all there is of democracy. If it be rightly constituted and conducted the people will be safe.

The present so-called primary is a mere caricature of what it should be. In the sense of being a self-directing assembly, and free consultation of the people, it is no Caucus at all. There is no actual session, and little or no discussion. The effective

work of selecting delegates is constantly done beforehand by a single leader, or a little ring of party managers. These hand a printed ticket to their "heelers," who pass it around to the few or many supposed voters present, and these, blindly or indifferently, put it into the box. When, as sometimes, rival tickets appear, only one can be regular, or, therefore, have much chance. But the details of this farcical and fraudulent business are sufficiently known to everybody. I only desire distinctly to point out that the great body of Caucus attendants have not and cannot have any efficient part in the business as it is now conducted.

Everything that relates to the primary, or Caucus, is of the most serious moment in popular government, for it is only when thus assembled that the mass of the people, under whatever system of elections, can take any effective part in the conduct of their common interests. Accordingly the dimensions of that body, its method of formation and assembling, and the regulation of its proceedings should be as well considered, and as exactly ordered by law, as the conduct of the highest deliberative body in the land.

The Size of the Primary

should be narrowly limited. It was justly observed by Hildreth, our best political historian, that "any assembly which consists of more than three or four hundred loses the power of deliberation, and degenerates into a mere mob, in which the conception

of the moment becomes contagious and omnipotent, and everything is carried by the noisiest and most violent." The proper number of voters in a primary would perhaps vary in some degree with the populousness of the community, but I doubt if it should ever be more than two hundred, while in a small city a much narrower number would be better. Of course, for the same civil division, or constituency, the size of the primary should always be identical.

In the present volunteer Party Organizations the primary is constructed on geographical lines, following usually the minor civil divisions of the constituency. Under a statutory system this method would perhaps still be the best in rural districts; but in the compact population of cities it would be in many ways objectionable. It must be nigh impossible to make the primaries approximate equality in numbers; with the growth and other changes of population the lines of division would need to be frequently changed, would often be difficult to define, needing sometimes to follow the halls or floors of tenement houses, or to cut them through, while gerrymandering, colonization, and the like evil devices must always be easy.

A better way has been devised. Let the names of all the voters in a ward, each on a separate card, be put in a panel, publicly drawn therefrom one by one, like the names of jurors, and distributed as they are drawn into as many lists as there are multiples in the whole registration of the number fixed on for a primary.

Besides avoiding the inconveniences of the

geographical method, this division by lot would have the advantage of furnishing a thorough mixture in each primary of all social elements; whereas now, in many city wards one primary is composed almost wholly of longshoremen and sailors, another of wealthy business men or millionaires, and a third of shop-workers, perhaps the employees of a single factory. Such primaries, it is evident, would be most apt to choose a one-sided deputy; whereas what we want is a symmetric representation of civic life at large.¹

This drawing should of course be matter of record.

Next, every voter should be personally notified through the post-office of the day, hour, and place, when and where, the primary group of voters in which he belongs, will assemble for the purpose of choosing its delegate.

The meeting of the primary should be sacredly private, instead of open to everybody as all Caucuses are now. Not only should outsiders have no right to be there, but their intrusion should be made a misdemeanor and severely punished.

This assembly of the people for the most serious of human undertakings must be not a mere coming together, but a true session and consultation, in order to the thoughtful and considerate transaction of the business in hand.

¹ The "lottery" feature of my system has been most mistakenly represented in the *Atlantic*, the *Arena*, the *Review of Reviews*, the *Evening Post*, and in fact almost everywhere, as the substance of my scheme. Indeed not a few of these instructors of their neighbors have made me choose all public officers *by lot*!

The town meeting and the school meeting of New England are held in a church or a school-house. They are as regularly organized as a convention of bishops or the Senate at Washington, and their whole business is conducted with like method and sobriety; and thus must the primary of politics be ordered if we are ever to have a government of the people. The place of meeting should be sufficiently spacious, provided with plenty of seats, a desk, writing materials, and whatever else is necessary or convenient in the conduct of such affairs.

This point is of infinite importance, and is the most vital novelty of my scheme.—Is there any consultation or conference of the people in our present Caucuses? None whatever. Most often there is but one ticket, or nomination, of delegates, and that is constantly prepared beforehand by the "leaders"; as is equally the case when a contest obtains and two or more lists of delegates are put in nomination. The mass of voters are the merest tools of the active politicians, who seek simply their own continuance in power for their own purposes. How changed will be the situation under this method! It is this that makes this scheme a true democracy; for the primary is not merely the basis, or bottom course, of popular government, it is all there is of it.

Here it may be asked, "Where will you find apartments for so many assemblages?" To this I answer that a single one in each ward will be enough, for it is no way important that they should

all be held on the same day. No matter if they run through a month, meeting on successive days in the same hall, or school-room.

All their proceedings should be strictly and minutely regulated by law. For example, it should be provided—and this is absolutely essential in the interest of full attendance and full deliberation—that the election of delegates should not be perfected, or the meeting adjourned, till a certain period—an hour or more—after the time appointed for meeting; nor without calling the roll, securing thus a full opportunity for nominations, discussion, and tentative balloting.

At proper intervals—and every third year would be often enough, at least after the new plan was well at work—this construction of the primary should be repeated.

In the selection of its delegates the primary should have the range of the ward of which it forms a part, only that it should be forbidden to choose one of its own members—which otherwise it would be very sure to do out of mutual civility. A citizen from outside of their own number would be equally representative, and, not being present, could be thoroughly discussed and impartially considered, which can hardly be done before a man's face.

I have proposed a single delegate in all situations and for all purposes, having after long reflection concluded that this is by far the best way. The party practice is different, but the matter is too complex for argument.

The Convention of Delegates

Let all the electors so chosen in a ward constitute a College of Electors for such ward, and, called together by the mayor, they shall in public session and *viva voce* elect all the officers of the ward; so the delegates from all the wards of the city shall form a City College, and shall select and establish all the officers of the city at large.

In the case where the city, or a part of it, helps constitute some larger civil division, such as a judicial or (State) senatorial district, the same delegates should attend and take their part with the delegates from the other sections of the district in a corresponding convention for the election of a judge, or a senator, as the case may be.

Finally, I propose a new and universal law of office tenure, viz.:

Every public officer, including delegates, may be summarily removed at the will of the authority to which he owes his office, and another substituted.

To this end provision should be made for calling together any primary or College at the request of a majority of its members. No apprehension, I am sure, need be felt that such a provision would lead to frequent or hasty changes. The whole scheme tends to and will promote the most deliberate and dispassionate action. How much delay, trouble, perplexity, expense, and injury to the public service, resulting from present methods of removing public officers, would be saved by this change I need not describe.

The application of this method of popular organization in the case of a small or medium-sized city may be seen in the following bill which the people of Oswego long labored to get enacted at Albany :

The people of the State of New York do enact as follows :

Section 1. From and after the passage of this act municipal elections in the city of Oswego shall be conducted in the following manner :

Section 2. For the purposes of such election said city is hereby divided into four Election Districts; the first and third wards constituting the first Election District, the second and fourth wards the second Election District, the fifth and seventh wards the third Election District, and the sixth and eighth wards constituting the fourth Election District.

Section 3. It shall be the duty of the city clerk on the first Monday of September to open in his office for each of the above described Election Districts a separate book of additional registration, in which he shall register on their personal application and request the names and addresses of all legal voters not contained in the last preceding registry, together with those whose registration may by change of residence have become erroneous. Such opportunity for registration shall be open between the hours of two and nine o'clock P.M. for one week, and shall be advertised in the public prints by said clerk for two days previous to, and during that period.

Section 4. It shall then be the duty of the city clerk forthwith to procure to be printed, each on a separate card of uniform size and appearance, the names and addresses of all the voters registered, whether at the last preceding general registry or as above provided for, and to deposit them, indiscriminately mingled together, in

panels, the names of the voters in each Election District, and none others, all in the same panel.

Section 5. On the last Monday in September it shall be the duty of the city clerk, beginning at nine o'clock A.M., in the chamber of the common council and in the presence of the Mayor and of the public, to draw one by one all the names in each panel, as the names of jurors are drawn, and to distribute them equally one by one as they are drawn into as many numbered lots or lists as there are multiples of seventy in the sum of such names—with one additional if a remainder exceeding twenty-five be left; said clerk shall publicly announce the names as drawn, and cause them to be immediately recorded in their proper lists and Election Districts.

Section 6. Each of such lists shall constitute a Primary Electoral Constituency, and shall be entitled and known as "List the first," second, or third, etc., as the case may be, of the Election District of which it may form a part.

Section 7. It shall be the duty of the secretary of the board of education in due season for all the purposes of this act, and with the approval of the Mayor, to have vacant, and supplied with sufficient seats, lights, and the necessary stationery, one or more of the most capacious and commodious school-rooms in each Election District, and to indicate and distinctly identify each of them in writing to the city clerk at or before the drawing provided for in the Fifth Section of this act: but the Mayor may in his discretion substitute for such school-rooms other places of assembly, in which case the duty of the secretary of the board of education as above described shall devolve upon the city clerk.

Section 8. Forthwith, or as soon as may be after the completed allotment and record ordered in the Fifth Section of this act, it shall be the duty of the city clerk

under the supervision of the Mayor to arrange and order the meetings of the several Lists or Constituencies on successive days at the school-rooms or other places of assembly, as herein before provided, each Constituency in its numerical order and in its own Election District; and to notify each voter, three days in advance, of the time and place appointed for the assembly of the List to which he belongs by mailing him a postal card with the following inscription, viz.:

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE, }
October , OSWEGO, N. Y. }

Mr. A. B., No. M. X. Street:

Take notice that theth Primary Constituency of theth Election District, of which you are a member, will meet for the purpose of choosing its Electoral Delegate on the day of October, 189 , at three o'clock P.M. in the (here identify place of meeting).

C. O., City Clerk.

Section 9. It shall be the duty of the Mayor, by personal notice in writing and in due time, to appoint from each List a member thereof who shall act as its presiding officer until it shall organize itself; and the duty of the city clerk to furnish such appointee with an alphabetical list of the members of the Constituency and a printed copy of the Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Sections of this act.

Section 10. The Primary Constituency having assembled, and organized itself by the election of a president, secretary, and three inspectors of election, shall proceed, in its own time and by the vote of a majority of the members present and voting, to choose from among the voters in its Election District, but not of its own

number, an Electoral Delegate; but such election shall not be final and conclusive sooner than two hours after the date of assembling, and shall then be made certain by a call of the roll, at which voting shall be by ballot. The result shall be certified by the signatures of the president, secretary, and at least a majority of the inspectors of election: which certification shall cure any previous irregularities, shall be filed by the secretary in the office of the city clerk, and shall be in the following form, viz.:

OSWEGO, _____

It is hereby certified that A. B. is this day chosen by List No. _____ of the _____th Election District as its Electoral Delegate.

_____, President.

_____, Secretary.

A. B.,)
C. D., } Inspectors of Election.
E. F., }

But in case a choice be not effected within a reasonable time, an adjournment may be had, of which the secretary shall give notice in writing to the city clerk, whose duty it shall be with the approval of the Mayor to appoint a subsequent date for such adjourned meeting, giving notice thereof in the manner directed in Section Eighth.

Section 11. The officers of this assembly shall have the authority during its session of officers of the peace. None but its lawful members shall be admitted to its deliberations, and intrusion there shall be a misdemeanor.

Section 12. The body of Delegates so chosen in each Election District shall constitute the College of Electors of such district; and the body of those chosen in all the Election Districts of the city shall constitute the City

College of Electors. But an Electoral Delegate during his necessary absence from the city, or confinement by sickness, may in writing, of which a copy shall be filed with the city clerk, delegate his functions to another Delegate. And a Delegate chosen by more than one Constituency or List shall have votes in the Electoral College in proportion to the number of such Constituencies.

Section 13. It shall be the duty of the city clerk forthwith to notify through the post-office each Electoral Delegate of his election; and, with the approval of the Mayor, to appoint a date by day, hour, and place for the first assembly of the several Colleges of Electors, and to notify thereof through the post-office their several members. The dates appointed shall be within one week after the completion of the above elections, and at some convenient apartment of the city hall or public school-room, which it shall be the duty of the city clerk to make ready on notification by the Mayor.

Section 14. So notified, and assembled accordingly, the Electoral College of each Election District, after organizing itself according to the custom of deliberative bodies, shall proceed at its own discretion and in its own time and manner to choose and appoint by the vote of a majority of all its members, the aldermen and all the other officers, heretofore or hereafter elective, of the wards of which the Election District consists.

Section 15. In like manner and with like conditions the City College of Electors shall choose and appoint the Mayor and such other officers of the city at large as are or may be by law elective; and shall have power, at its discretion, to fix the salaries of all city officers.

Section 16. All the foregoing proceedings shall be repeated every third year.

Section 17. Every election by a Primary Constituency or a College of Electors shall be immediately certified in writing by the president and secretary of such body to the city clerk, who shall record the same, and forthwith notify in writing the person elected of his election; and any officer displaced shall by the said clerk be notified of his displacement.

Section 18. It shall be the duty of the city clerk at the written request of one-half of the members of any Primary Constituency, or a written request from its president, and also on its deprivation by death or removal from the city of its Electoral Delegate, forthwith to call together the members of such Constituency by written notice to each for the purpose of filling the vacancy or changing its Electoral Delegate; but that officer shall be changed only by a vote of a majority of all the members of the Constituency.

Section 19. So any College of Electors, called together at any time by its president or secretary, or by the city clerk at the written request of one-half of its members, which request it shall be his duty to obey, shall have power, but only by the vote of a majority of all its members, to fill any vacancy among the municipal officers subject to it, or to remove any officer and appoint another, except as hereinafter provided.

Section 20. All the officers of the city government at the passage of this act, and all the officers elected under it, shall hold office till their successors are chosen, and no longer. But no person holding office at the date of its passage shall be removed by its operation before the expiration of the term for which he was elected.

Section 21. The expenditures of the city clerk, secretary of the board of education, or other officer, made necessary by the operation of this act shall be audited

by the common council elected under it, and shall be a charge upon the city treasurer; but no representative elector shall receive any compensation.

Section 22. The wilful neglect or perversion by any public functionary of the duties herein enjoined on him, or the hindrance or perversion by any person of the proceedings herein ordained, shall be a misdemeanor and shall be punished accordingly.

Section 23. All laws and parts of laws and ordinances incompatible with the method of election herein ordained, contradictory to it, or made superfluous by it, are hereby repealed so far as concerns the city of Oswego.

This is the whole scheme as applied to a political community of, say, not more than a quarter of a million population, or forty thousand voters.

But when from the size of a community or constituency, whether a State, a city, or other minor civil division like some judicial districts, the number of primary delegates becomes too great for real conference and considerate action, then a higher or second grade of representation in convention must be resorted to. This may be done by having each assembly convention elect a delegate or delegates to a judicial or a State convention as the case may be. In the greater States, and perhaps in the two greatest of our cities, a still higher grade of convention, constructed on the same principles, should be instituted, and a fourth for the election of a President. But in this whole matter we shall have only to consult the methods of politicians, and copy the stupendous fabric which they have erected, and under which we draw our political breath.

CHAPTER IV

THE PECULIAR FEATURES OF THIS PLAN

SIMPLE as is this scheme in its principles and methods, it nevertheless greatly alters the customary attitude of the voter in many important particulars. Let us look at the chief of them, summarily, in their rationale.

(a) The Lot-drawn Popular Constituency.

In the first place, it furnishes, in the Lot-drawn Constituency of the Primary Delegate, a new integration of democracy. This method of dividing up popular power has the advantage over the geographical, which now universally obtains, of allowing of no fraud or injustice whatsoever,—such as gerrymandering, constituencies of equal political weight but of unequal numbers, and the like prevailing wrongs to democracy. It has the still greater advantage of tripping by the heels the Political Organizer, by periodically making up the popular constituency anew. Besides, mingling together afresh at frequent periods, as it does, all the various personalities and influences of society, it will surely effect a truer representation of the general will under all circumstances, than any other system has effected

or promises to effect. Here no special attempt can cope with prevailing opinion and just influence. When the germ of democratic authority shall be so symmetrically shaped, its fruits will surely never be deformed.

(b) A New and Needed Singleness and Simplicity of Individual Function in Politics.

Under this system the voter, as a member of any large constituency, will have before him only the plain and easy business of helping to select a representative from among his neighbors to act for him in the establishment of high authority. Thus will his work be cleared from difficulty and his conscience from doubt.

This surely is no small reform. Under our present constitutions we are set to an impossible task. At a recent election in Chicago sixty-eight public functionaries were to be voted for. It is about the same in every large community whenever it chooses its local, State, and federal functionaries at the same time. Yesterday I voted for quite two-thirds as many as that, though municipal officers and school commissioners were not to be elected then.

Now, the theory of democracy is, that in each case we vote for a man that we have good reason to think is eminently fit for the duties he will have to discharge; but the notorious fact is, that nine times out of ten, we know little or nothing about him. Every year we are called upon to vote for forty men, more or less, scattered all over the city, the

county, the State, and the nation, each of whom is to be discovered by us to be qualified for the business we propose to set him at! The highest talent and industry, with every opportunity, would hardly suffice to qualify a man, vacant for the task, properly to do this; and yet common folks, so engrossed with the supreme business of getting a living, and so unprepared, are expected to do it! So ignorant are the mass of us, actually and of necessity, about the special qualifications of the several men we vote for, that if the names on the ticket were shifted round so that the candidate for Congress were running for State engineer, the superintendent of education for coroner, and the sheriff for judge, it would be all the same to us in nine cases out of ten. I know not what could more disgust every reflecting mind with our present system of elections than this feature of it, or more clearly demonstrate its unsoundness.

(c) The Voter will be Acting within the Sphere of his Intelligence and his Power.

The three rank impostures that have been pointed out as inseparable from the present system of direct popular elections in large constituencies are here effectually expunged. No longer, at the dictate of leaders whom we have not chosen, shall we vote for men whom we do not know, to discharge duties that we do not understand.

(1) As to power, the whole business of the voter will be within arm's length, and if he still remain

the mere tool of adroit politicians, which he will not, it will no longer be of necessity, as now, but of his own choice.

(2) As to his knowledge of men, while it is not pretended that every voter in a town or ward personally knows all the other voters in it, it is claimed that, with some rare exceptions in new communities, the great majority of voters, either through actual intercourse or neighborhood repute, are well cognizant of the character of some, at least, of the most prominent citizens of their precincts, and can therefore take intelligent part in the selection of a Primary Elector. Consider what, in place of such trustworthy information, the average voter has now to rely on in this regard when he is called on to vote for mayor, member of Congress, or governor! Almost absolutely nothing, save the reckless, venal, or fanatical laudations and defamations of party candidates from the newspaper and the stump. Yet these avail to raise foul birds so high in common contemplation that they are taken for eagles, and to drag eagles in the dirt. Of all things, political reputation is now about the cheapest and most transitory. Out of ten names bruited and emblazoned in our politics a dozen years ago nine are already in oblivion, and the tenth not always merits its exceptional remembrance. This is but the forgery of fame. I mean to restore its authentic signature.

(3) The average voter is also fully competent to understand the substance of the business that his Representative Delegate is here set at. There is no mystification, complexity, or profundity about it.

(d) Calling the Roll.

In the fourth place, I introduce into the assembly of the people the calling of the roll when the determinative vote is taken. This is customary in the business of all higher political bodies, such as municipal councils and Congress, as being necessary to order, attention, completeness, and certainty, and will here be equally conducive to the same important ends. No mere registry of voters can be of full avail against fraud without it.

(e) The Conference of the People.

I make the actual assembly and session of voters in real Conference the bottom course of politics. "Kings, Lords, and Commons," said Erskine, "are but a machine to put twelve men in a box." Here, conversely, a present, personal inquest of the people is made the original root and sole authorization of every grade and act of public power. If not the most novel, this is certainly the most essential and virtuous feature of the system of democratic government here propounded.

Only when men are brought face to face in friendly talk, do they fully understand each other, or can they hold true counsel; nor without such opportunity can concert of purpose or action be arrived at, and democracy unified and empowered. Thus only can the real voice of the people be heard. What is now prated of as that august note is but an echo of the call and cry of politicians. How essential are the actual gathering and consultation of the people

to a true expression of their will and the exertion of their power, and how much they are an instinctive impulse of the spirit of democracy, may be seen in this, that in every political or social emergency, about war, taxes, charity, or anything else, a public meeting is always called for.

But there is no need to theorize about the matter: our own history furnishes the crowning demonstration of facts. I but copy in this feature of my system the old town meeting of New England, and give its principles an universal scope. Whatever beneficent political instruction the country owes to that region, which by general consent is not small, was prepared in the township. Nowhere else has democracy ever so highly distinguished itself. Let Thomas Jefferson bear witness to its enormous virtue. His Embargo Act, approved by all the nation besides, was contested by a mere handful of the people, seated far off in the circumference of the country, but wielding the advantage that is our present topic. His courageous spirit almost quailed before their opposition. "How powerfully," says he, "did we feel the energy of this system in the case of the Embargo! I felt the foundation of the government shaken under my feet by the New England township. There was not an individual in those States whose body was not thrown with all its momentum into action, and although the whole of the other States were known to be in favor of the measure, the organization of this little minority enabled it to override the Union." "The longer he lived," says Mr. Parton, "the more he felt the need

of a subdivision of territory like the towns of New England," nor did he cease to urge it upon Virginia until his dying day.

But the vital secret of the "energy of the township system of New England," this enthusiast of democracy failed after all fully to comprehend. It is not due, as he seems to have thought, principally to "organization," however important that may be; nor is it due to the mere propinquity of voters to the polls, enabling them easily to gather there, to which he in another letter ascribes it,—for surely the voters in our cities, now impotent and defrauded above all others, have no difficulty about that. The real root of its virtue, as an element of politics, is the gathering of neighbors and acquaintances in actual conference. Accordingly John Adams, when minister to the British court, replied to an inquiry about the cause of the superiority of New England in politics, that it was owing to the "town meeting, the school meeting, the church meeting, and the meeting of the militia on training day." Here is the keystone of democracy. In the presence of the popular assembly tyrants tremble, and throughout history it has been a chief care with them to forbid, or at least to supervise it. Whenever its fast waning influence in our politics shall wholly disappear, we shall shove off into unfathomed depths.

In such assemblages alone has democracy shown well because only here is it in full possession of itself. Only when its units of influence are in the presence of each other can each enjoy its rightful sway, and a genuine result be begot. In this

encounter and combat of native powers the base but showy elements of demagogism and fanatic partisanship are sent flying, like coruscating cinders between the blacksmith's hammer and the anvil, while solid metal remains and receives the workman's impress. So, too, by the heat and force of intimate contact and discussion, all diverse impulses and intentions are here welded into a homogeneous whole, forming a shaft of power whose weighty motion might well be felt, as Jefferson felt it, beneath the distant seats of fixed authority.

Meantime, this open court—open and public to its members — is in the way of all wrongful procedure. Many vicious things are done in a corner that would never be dared in the forum.

Conduct of this Conference.—But the probable behavior of a section of the people thus gathered by impartial lot for the choice of a Representative Delegate deserves more particular consideration: for as all the conclusions of geometry are ultimately based on that simple proposition in the beginning of Euclid where one triangle is laid upon another, so the success of the whole frame of government as here set out will depend upon the demeanor of this little assembly. Like that proposition, too, this must be studied with the mind's eye; for though political truth in its crude and partial forms may be collected from history and statistics, in its exactitude and completeness it is the deduction of the informed imagination only. The likeness goes a step farther: as in that proposition it is shown that when three chief elements fall together all the rest must

coincide, so here, if popular power, intelligence, and opportunity are at hand, democracy will not fail to do its perfect work in every particular.

(1) In the first place, all the circumstances of this occasion will be favorable to the full autonomy of the people. Here surely the anticipatory arts by which self-seeking politicians now get control of the Party Caucus will find little opportunity or inducement. Time will be wanting between the making-up and the session of this fresh-formed constituency to hunt out and manipulate its scattered members, and the advantage to be gained thereby will be too small, distant, and uncertain. Above all, this Reformed Caucus cannot be packed. Of course there is nothing to hinder a previous consultation of its partisan members, or a combination of interests, opinions, or influences for uniting upon a particular man as candidate for Representative Elector: but neither is there anything objectionable to the spirit of democracy in their doing so. The supreme excellence of this feature of my system is, that all such arrangements, and all specialties and diversities, will be brought up with a round turn to a common mooring when the whole constituency meet together face to face.

(2) In this equal and law-ruled assembly of the people the vices that constantly characterize the present irresponsible Party Caucus will have no chance. No minority can prevail, as so often it does now, by virtue of "having the organization," nor can any conspiring clique secretly carry on its corrupt negotiations. Here will be no sudden

turning of the hat, no repeating, no false counting, and no false returns. The politician, in a word, will be as other men. If in any way he can control the votes of a majority, he has a full right to do so by all the principles of democracy.

(3) Meantime all honest preferences and opinions will have a fair field, and whatever influence justly belongs to character, talent, position, occupation, property, education, or any other element of social force, will find full scope.

(4) Add to this the gravity of the occasion, the retirement and quiet, and the unimpeded opportunity for consultation, deliberation, and debate, and it can hardly be conceived how the action of this Primary Constituency will be other than truly representative of the sober public will.

But what manner of man is likely to be chosen under these circumstances by this microcosm of democracy to take the place of the present omnipotent delegate of the Party Caucus? Will the mass of the people, acting freely and within the sphere of their knowledge, be likely to prefer corrupt and incompetent representatives? If they will, then surely democracy must forever be a failure. For my part I am confident that they will not. Assuredly the voter, in the position where I put him, is going to do the best he knows how, because here the path of duty and the path of interest will nigh always coincide. For not more than one in fifty of your neighbors has, or can have, so great other concern about politics as to see that the public business is wisely, justly, and economically conducted. It

is impossible to imagine what sufficient temptation the mass of the community can have knowingly to bestow the function of the Primary Elector upon men unworthy of it. Seldom are men who come in frequent contact falsely judged of by each other. Far-flying rumor is deceitful, but the testimony of comrades is true. No honest man fears to trust his reputation to those whom he lives among. There is no companionship that does not in the main recognize its wise members and its honest, its fools and its rogues. The deacon of a church is nearly always representative of its piety, the president of a club of its spirit, the captain of a band of gold-hunters of its enterprise and hardihood.

The trusty guidance of repute is not lacking, as some might suppose it to be, even in the populous wards of great cities. Men are thick scattered through New York, even in the lowest wards, whose worth is nigh as well recognized among the people as the corners of the streets. It is from among these that democracy will select its Representative Electors when it is gathered in the unembarrassed constituency that I have set up. No doubt this method will do better in some cases than in others. I do not claim that the best man will always be chosen. The highest qualities are somewhat above ordinary comprehension, and there may be some neighborhoods where folly and misbehavior are at a premium. This only is claimed—that the man chosen in this free conference and fair struggle will be as truly representative as is possible of the best aspirations of the men who select him.

*(f) A Large Extension of the Representative Principle
in Politics*

is the next important feature of this system. In our present constitutions this method of democracy shows itself but brokenly, surmounting here and there in an unsystematic way the dead level of the ballot-box. A logical completeness in its application is here attempted. In all cases where a constituency is too large for the convenient assembly, orderly consultation, or presumably intelligent action of the whole body of it, it is to be cut up into handy squads, which will act, not directly, but through delegates.

The right application of the principle of Representation has long been regarded by philosophic minds as the key to the success of popular government; and has accordingly employed the constant attention of the framers and students of organic law in republican societies. In modern times Montesquieu, Locke, Sieyès, Hamilton, Bentham, Grote, Hildreth, Mills, and a thousand other friends of liberty have laboriously considered it, with the result of innumerable conclusions and devices.

The framers of our federal institutions gave the problem careful thought, and embodied their conclusions in the election of federal senators by State legislatures, in the Colleges of Presidential Electors, and in the appointment of judges and various executive functionaries by a governor, mayor, or President, with or without the advice and consent of legislators or aldermen.

But the growing misbehavior of our politics has

lately brought the subject into fresh discussion. At the present time general opinion, authorship, and the work of constitutional conventions, seem to be about equally divided between a closer limitation, and a farther extension of the principle of Representation. On the one hand, seen that the Colleges of Presidential Electors have become the mere mouthpiece of Political Organization, and even threaten to be robbed at Washington of the power to certify for their respective States, the immediate choice of the federal executive by the people is called for. So, in view of the partisanship and other vices of the State legislatures that now elect federal senators, it has been proposed to bestow the choice of these in the same quarter. On the other hand, the election of the high judiciary and some other officers of wide jurisdiction by the people not always working satisfactorily, many demand a return to the system of appointment by governors and mayors, or by legislatures and common councils. When a city finds itself suffering from the ballot-box, it turns to commissions appointed by the legislature for rescue: these using her almost worse, the popular voice is recalled to power. In the argument for neither side do reason or the lessons of history much appear. Each cause finds its chief strength in the failures of the other, —and finds there indeed no mean support; for certain it is that the results of our present ways of establishing public authority in all large constituencies, whether by popular ballot, executive appointment, or however else, furnish little to be proud of.

It would be a long undertaking to set forth the full theoretic relations of the Representative principle in Democratic government; and still more would it be laborious for the writer and tedious to the reader to illustrate and confirm the argument by sufficient historic examples. But, fortunately, this toil and tedium can be spared. If we seek aright, full instruction can be got from higher quarters than dubious speculation, or the misty records of governments gone by. We stand in the very presence of phenomena of overwhelming significance in this regard. The spontaneous appearance and now universal rule of Political Organization, whose system of Representation I little more than copy, furnish a demonstration of nature's methods that only fatuity can disregard. It is "a higher law" than was ever written on parchment that has put the Caucus and Convention on the throne. They are of nature's royal line and will never yield their place till democracy shall clothe itself with their own purple habiliments and wield their very sceptre.

How natural and indispensable is this method of popular action may also be witnessed in the fact that it is now being taken up in Great Britain, France, and Prussia, *pari passu* with the growth of popular rule. In England the Party Caucus system has made steady headway since the extension of the suffrage by the act of 1867. Mr. Chamberlain's acumen adopted it early, and though the Tories scorned to employ it at first, they have adopted it and developed it as highly as the Liberal party. As

fast as the influence of an aristocracy of blood and money give way, this method of popular Organization must take their place. There is no one of us that goes to the Party Caucus, or calls on other people to do it and blames them if they do it not, or that sits in the Party Convention, but what bears witness to the solid authority of this principle of Political Organization. Not less do they who in independent popular council of whatever name undertake to displace old parties; for they constantly adopt the very methods which they rebel against.

Here surely are sufficient signs of some grave defect in the present system. The fact is that the chair of true democratic authority is now left vacant by the law, and Political Organization, a child of nature, has seated itself thereon. Born out of honest wedlock though the intruder be, he has good blood in his veins. Incapable to expel, we must legitimate him. For the self-seeking politicians who are now his ministers, secretaries, and chamberlains we must substitute men of our own selection. Thus will our present tyrant become our benefactor.

The most that my proposal differs from the present actuality of our politics is that I merge nomination and election in one, making form and substance coincide. The result of the poll is now a mere reflex of the Caucus and Convention. To set the people to review at the ballot the action of their Representative Delegates would be merely to carry along an expensive and troublesome superfluity.

(g) Graded Representation.

A logical Gradation in elective function is also here attempted, such as will keep pace with the expanding importance of political charge between the neighborhood and the nation, and correspond with that actual range of capacity among men which reaches from good sense to statesmanship. Hardly can this plan fail to secure that the upper colleges of electors will be composed of men widely known for high and virtuous character, for understanding of the requirements of the public service, and for acquaintance with whomever in the precinct is fittest to meet them. This virtue, surely, will this system have,—that the superior functionaries of law, judgment, and execution will be selected by men on whom public confidence is, as it were, accumulated, by the elect of the elect, by quantity and quality compounded.

Only in such way can large society hope to enjoy, save by rare accident, the instruction and guidance of its superior members; and not till this comes about can it be well conducted. Common minds are engrossed with near-by things, or look on distant with vision dim, distorted, and befogged; but great intelligence, like him who sits in the clear air of the mountain top, gathers wide regions in its survey.

What we lack above all else is statesmanship; but we shall never have statesmen to rule the State till rulers are chosen by statesmen. The judgment of peers is the only judgment. No man can appreciate

qualifications that he does not in some degree possess himself. The commonalty, in every wide jurisdiction, has too often preferred a Wilkes to a Burke, a Danton to a Sieyès, a Matthew Lyon to a Robert Morris,—being incapable, at such a distance, of distinguishing worth from worthlessness.

The ministry of Great Britain, so long and so constantly victorious over all the Eastern hemisphere, is an example of the virtue of the principle of Graded Representation. That authority is not chosen by the people themselves, nor by the mass of their immediate representatives in the House of Commons, but by a score or so of men whom the major opinion of Parliament silently appoints to the duty.

That the measure of understanding and integrity among Electors of the higher ranks will be in proportion to the magnitude of their charge can hardly be doubted. All along in this promotion the same suitable intelligence and interest will obtain that make local government good for local purposes, and general for general. The verdict of long history is not more trusty than will be democratic choice when it shall travel the sober stages that are here set for it. As in literature the criticism of successive generations constantly discriminates more justly between Bacon and Boyle, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, so by the repeated scrutiny and sifting of this system will democracy in its larger forms surely discover its worthiest guides. Only in this way can be answered the sneering but pertinent inquiry of Carlyle, "how can we expect forty millions, mostly

fools, to have wisdom to get themselves well governed ? ”

It deserves to be noticed that these Electors, not less in the higher Colleges than in the lowest, will be chosen, in a profound signification, by their neighbors. Only with narrow and slothful natures does neighborhood mean mere proximity of place. The fellowship of intellect, information, and sentiment has no such boundaries. Genius communes with genius across continents and seas. The great scientific and benevolent bodies of the time are composed of members scattered in geography, but collected in sympathy. In every department of science, business, or philanthropy where freedom is, its magnates gather in circle; and it will be so in politics whenever we shall be loosed from our present bondage.

In the choice of the highest public functionaries by this method such spontaneity of just results may fairly be looked for as we partly witness in our mother country, where, in some crisis, a new cabinet, disowning royalty, aristocracy, democracy, hierarchy, and every other special interest and influence in the record of its birth, springs suddenly into life, raised by the incantation of the time, and armed with the gathered force of the national will. In this country, on the other hand, such change of administration now comes about through the long labored combination of self-seeking politicians only, gathering to their party side, after indefinite contest and hurly-burly, a few more voices of the distracted people.

In fine, this system of Graded Representation is believed to be the true architecture of civil society in all its larger constructions. To establish authority in city, State, or nation by general ballot is but the random piling of a cairn. But I build up the structure brick by brick, beam by beam, and story by story. The power, and thereby the sole authenticated right of the majority to rule, is the immovable foundation of the fabric, and the prevailing sense of men its sound material; its rising stories will surely embody in succession still nobler conceits, while its lofty entablature and crowning dome cannot but express at last the highest purposes of the age.

But the probable behavior of the Representative Elector, who is here made the Grand Vizier of democracy, deserves a moment's closer attention; for all is not fair that seems. Our present election methods are specious, but their actual results are damnable. Will not this system also disappoint us?

That the Representative Elector of whatever grade will be fairly competent to his duty, and of reputed integrity, his free selection by a constituency, whether College or people, that must be presumed to know him, is the best guarantee that can be asked for. If, therefore, this trustee of democracy betray his trust, it must be because of his indifference to the public welfare, or from a hidden corruptibility. As to the former, no man can be regardless of the general weal till he is regardless of his own, and till all the wells of sympathy are dried up within his breast. About the probability of the latter men will differ according to their various

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estimates of the virtue of mankind, as triply derived from temperament, consciousness, and what they think they see. Pessimists, self-excusing knaves, and the shallow-sighted minds that erroneously take the behavior of our politics for a demonstration of human nature, constantly echo the saying of Walpole that "every man has his price." But this at the worst was never true except in the signification that "all that a man hath will he give for his life." Nor is it true even there. The long record of martyrdom for religion, country, honor, and humanity abundantly shows that there are those whom no money can buy.

However this may be, it is difficult to conceive, in the case of towns, wards, and other small constituencies, where the sufficient pecuniary or other wrongful inducement is to come from that will draw aside from the path of duty any considerable portion of the men who may be chosen by their companions to represent them in the Primary Electoral College. With the rising grades of this Representation the sense of right, it cannot be doubted, will proportionately strengthen, so that this security of great affairs will correspond with their temptations.

Meanwhile, whatever gives honor heart and holds it to its post will here abound. No ribbon, medal, or diploma was ever such stamp of merit, could command such wide respect, or so stir the emulation of dutiful men, as will the position of Representative Elector. In her day of glory Venice caused to be inscribed in a *libro d'oro*¹ the names of her

¹ Or book of gold,

worthiest citizens. When this system shall be in force the list of Representative Electors will be the Golden Register of the Republic. To prophesy the wanton self-degradation of him who has reached the dignity to be recorded there is to spit on human nature. It is to disregard all the lessons of history too, for always the love of honor has been about the last sentiment to depart from the human mind.

It is no small thing, in this regard, that the position of Representative Elector will be one of peculiar confidence. To him, as to a friend trusted without guarantee, society hands over its whole welfare. *Noblesse oblige*. Honor is bred in places of trust. If all other bonds were wanting this would not fail alone to hold the Representative Elector to the faithful and considerate discharge of his duty. It is a great argument for this conviction, that when the Presidency lately hung in a feather balance no trustee of party power could be found who would sell out.

Moreover, the Representative Elector will discharge his functions in the full view of them who have confided in him. Here is no place to hide. Horrid ignominy out of doors, as well as shame within the heart, will forever attend the abuse of that confidence. It is less terrible to bear the condemnation of all the world beside than to meet the eye of him who has put his trust in us and been betrayed.

This sentiment of honor, it should be noticed, is especially needed in public life; for to the calculating conscience it will never seem an hundredth part

so bad to steal from the public a thousand dollars, where it would hardly be felt by the individual, as to rob the private pocket of a shilling.

The sentiment of fellowship also, it is believed, will urge on this officer of democracy in the path of virtue. An *esprit de corps*, such as still guards the character of our army and navy amid surrounding degradation, may fairly be expected to hold sway in the Electoral Colleges. The fraternity of honor—to refer again to the faithfulness of politicians toward each other—should surely be as strong as the fraternity of fraud.

In judging how the Representative Elector will demean himself, it should be remembered that his place, unlike that of the delegate of Political Organization whom he is meant to supersede, will not be the acquisition of his own labor and expenditure, the opportunities of which he can accordingly, by no mean claim, call his own property, to be bargained about like the products of any other farm, but will be the free bestowal of his neighbors and acquaintances.

Neither will this magistrate be able to throw the responsibility of his course upon party authorization or requirement, as the delegates of Party Organization do of theirs; for, not a portion of the people, but the whole, will have participated in his election. Nor can he cast it forward upon a confirmatory vote of the people; for there will be here no subsequent popular poll to pass upon his action. Now when a bad man is put into power, the people lay it to the politicians who nominated him, and politicians to

the people who elected him; but there will be no room for such evasion here.

But what is there, it may be asked, to hinder self-seekers, banded together, from managing the Colleges of Electors as they now do Party Conventions, and fixing appointments to suit their own interests? Nothing, I grant, absolutely nothing, save the character of the Electors themselves, doubly spurred, as they will be, by the greatness and directness of their obligations, to do what is right. Fraud and falsity will surely have no advantage in this open assembly of the people's Delegates, any more than in the retired Conference of the people themselves. If liberty's selected men betray her here, then liberty is a delusion. But they will not. These bodies will come together without previous sinister obligation, concert, or entanglement, and will find both full opportunity and every inducement toward integrity and independence. Not that there will be no room for the contest or combination of interests, no demand for a distribution of offices according to geography or influence, or that party, prejudice, and selfishness will have no voice,—but that the power of all such mischievous elements will be the most diminished that human nature admits of, and that it cannot but be infinitely less than it is in the Convention of party politicians which now control our destinies.

Let it be noticed that how these Colleges of Electors will conduct themselves is by no means to be judged of by the behavior of any of the bodies that under our present constitutions exercise resembling

functions. These all are utterly lost to their original design. Our Presidential Colleges, set, in theory, to an independent and most exalted duty, have long since notoriously become in fact but the mere secretaries of Party Organization. They have escaped rottenness by petrification. So the legislatures that choose federal senators and many State functionaries, and the common councils to whom is now committed the appointment of various municipal officers, are the product, and therefore the servitors, of the same evil authority, and are habited in the foul garments of their parentage. In the best of them democracy is metamorphosed into mere partisanship. No more were such bodies as the Council of Appointment under the first constitution of this State at all analogous to what is here proposed. That was a narrow dynasty, gathered by hereditary pretension, bureaucracy, and party intermixed, and giving no employment to the virtues of democracy at large.

(h) Isolation of the Function of Appointment.

It is the next peculiarity of this system that it wholly separates the appointing power from every other political charge. This important business is now constantly added, in the most promiscuous way, to legislative, executive, and even judicial duties. The President not merely is the executive and holds supremacy in our legislature, but also has substantially the construction of the judicial bench. Governors and mayors find added to their executive

function the making of no end of appointments that have properly no connection with it. The federal senate—surely occupied enough with making laws—must also take part in the appointment of judges, collectors, postmasters, and foreign ministers. So, State legislatures help appoint federal senators and State functionaries. The like with municipal councils. Even the judiciary is diverted from its proper business in this direction,—appointing, in the State of New York, for instance, referees or substitute judges, commissioners of lunacy, excise, railroads, and so on, and, in Philadelphia, various municipal officers. Such mixture and multiplication of concerns can but embarrass every public duty. The affair of selecting rulers is wholly foreign to the special capabilities that are needed to make, interpret, or maintain the laws, and should be set apart by itself, as will be done under this plan.

Thus will not a few of the vain checks and balances which incompetent political mechanics have laboriously contrived for the regulation of democratic government be got out of the way. When the people shall hold sway, no check will be needed; and when their will shall settle on one side, no counteracting balance can avail.

My plan involves a still deeper virtue.

(i) Men, not Measures,

will ordinarily become the chief cynosure of the voter's regard.

This is a great and pregnant innovation. Now

for the most part, in all large constituencies at least, we vote for this man or that because we suppose him to represent certain measures or policies, as customarily set forth in the party platform. The prevailing idea is, that the opinion of the mass of voters should regulate all public policy, however various, complicated, or remote. Accordingly, public men listen for "the voice of the people" to tell them how to decide the tariff question, the railroad question, and the currency question. If they neglect to attend to this duty we "instruct" them, by petitions, and in public meetings. The growing tendency to submit public measures of one sort and another to direct popular vote has the same signification.

My scheme of politics means to change all this by removing the helm of difficult and distant affairs beyond the immediate reach of popular opinion. It is expected that the Representative Elector, to whom is here entrusted the establishment of all high authority, will be chosen without much regard to specific measures, save when some such vital question as that between war and peace may come up.

This object is not only incompatible with our present system of democratic construction, but, I am aware, is also in conflict with the current ideas and efforts of patriotism. "Principles, not Persons," is the customary boast of political conscientiousness. In accordance therewith the people are constantly urged to inform themselves on public questions. It is lately proposed to teach politics in the common schools, so as to make all our children—even the girls—wise in the business of the State!

—Nevertheless, the change that I intend accords with common sense, philosophy, and all the lessons of the past.

That the will of the majority is the logical and lasting basis of political power has already been claimed. It carries with it physical superiority, and may therefore fitly find expression on any issue that threatens the public peace or the common welfare. Whatever its value as a guide to what is right, it will often settle what is expedient. Thus the plebiscites of Louis Napoleon, notwithstanding all their fraudulence, were peaceful allies of the eternal law of the strongest, fending off for a time the bloody arbitrament of arms. Neither is it by any means denied that popular opinion, within the sphere of its capacity and opportunity, is a worthy guide. The average voter can tell well enough, for example, whether a new wagon-road ought to be opened between the east side of the town and the west, though his judgment cannot but be poor about the profitableness of bonding his farm to build a railroad to Boston or Chicago. So, the saying that "all men are wiser than any one man" is of incontestable truth whenever instinct, general experience, and long observation hold dispute with such conceits of the individual brain, as that it is unhealthy to eat pork, or for a farmer's barnyard to be unsewered; or when hygienic professors advised Dickens at fifty years of age to take a brisk walk of ten miles every morning, hurrying him to his grave. So, too, the prime doctrines of humanity and justice, of family, property, freedom, and equality, have their

stoutest sanction and security in public opinion. Neither will I deny that in the highest political walks a certain vague public sentiment about the general interest, or the state and duty of the commonwealth, still retains some virtuous force, notwithstanding its present dispersion.

What I claim, and what my system in this respect proceeds on, is that ordinary intelligence is wholly unequal to the solution of the many nice questions that mostly occupy the attention of political society in civilized communities; and that to submit them in any way to its determination is a grievous mistake. Look around among your neighbors and tell me how many of them have any good understanding of the many political issues that are now presented! The people, like children, know what they want, but not always what they need. This incapacity was seen of old. "Ill fares it where the multitude have sway," said Homer and the Stagyrte. The virtues of direct popular rule, which is what voting on measures chiefly means, were tried out long ago in Greece and Rome. If those pure and master races in their numerous experiments of direct democracy did always fail, hardly can the mixed, if not inferior, populations of Brooklyn, Kansas, Mexico, or France hope to succeed. To all but superior intelligence the issues of modern politics are not only dubious but unintelligible. They do not come within the purview of that "common sense of the people" to which Jefferson and the other early apostles of American democracy so confidently and safely trusted. The average voter can

tell how his assessment grows, how much dearer his tobacco is in consequence of the federal excise, and whether his representative in Congress or the State legislature stands by his party and fills the show bill of the campaign, and about there his political appreciation too often stops. When you go beyond the limits of actual personal observation, stimulated by immediate interest, you leave the companionship of inferior minds. Any system of democratic construction that overlooks this truth must forever fail.

If but one matter were in question, voting for measures might do; but our politics constantly presents a score of disputes. To which of them shall we attend when we vote for "principles, not men?"

In disregard of these incontestable truths our present system of elections in effect calls upon the people to vote on the various and difficult questions of finance and currency, modes of taxation, free trade, internal commerce, usury, Indian policy, minority representation, the construction of municipalities, the reconstruction of the bank system, pisciculture, and Porto Rico. Time is wanting to the busy people for the mastery of so many various topics. But, make life a leisure, and still average intelligence would be as incompetent to the work as it is to predict an eclipse of the sun.

In a word, when the average member of any large constituency has taken part in the choice of a Primary Representative Elector, he has done all that he can advantageously do. It is "men, not measures," that I claim to be the key of democratic success. I mean to raise personal character, the

Cinderella that now, neglected and forlorn, obeys unworthy sisters, to its rightful throne.

Ideas are but an appendage of humanity. Measures are the work of men. Every government, at least for the current generation, is the rule of individuals far more than of doctrines or even of development. Personality is the prime factor in the career of society, whether in war or in peace, for conservation or for correction, in every virtuous and in every vicious field. There is no page of history that has not been made dark or bright by its force, or, that failing, fallen upon the slippery wheel of fortune. Whatever has been done worthy of memory in Judea, Greece, Rome, or any modern nation, was done, not by general popular movement, but by the individual might of David, Pericles, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Cromwell, Washington, Cobden, Cavour, Bismarck, Lincoln. In this sign,—not as standing on any platform of doctrines, but by the force of all behavior,—conquered Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, and whoever else, less exalted, in ancient and modern times, has helped to shape the destiny of mankind. Democracy can never thrive, nor do deeds worthy of itself, but must still grope and suffer, till it is guided by the light, and submits to the rule, of superior minds. At the present moment, the success of governments throughout the world is pretty much in proportion to the prevalence of this element. To its absence are due, by general admission, the torments of France and the decay of Italy and Spain.

Nothing is so appreciable to human intelligence

as the strong visage of personal character. Of all the judgments of men, those are the most just that concern men. Here anthropomorphism does not delude. Seldom does the final moment leave in doubt, among those who have consorted with him, the understanding, the integrity, or the temper of any man. The whisper of neighbors about the grave is an epitaph that never lies.

But this estimate of men must be based, as already indicated, on the solid ground of actual acquaintance, through personal intercourse or established repute. It is this kind alone that is to be employed here, and this kind is undertaken to be made full use of. Under the present system of elections it has little opportunity, save in the narrowest fields. Outside of these, the average voter has nothing to guide him but the noise of the public press, which now is little but a trade or a tool, but which yet outweighs in political influence all legitimate opinion.

However all this may be, one thing at least is certain, viz.: That the personal character of public men is absolutely the only safeguard of the public welfare. The past and present alike proclaim that the spirit of the people, laws, constitutions, treaties, compacts, charters, bonds, investigations, and penalties are an uncertain reliance. Only when legislators themselves are wise shall we have wise laws; only when judges are just can there be righteous judgment; only when the executive is vigorous will the government be strong. Especially absolute in large constituencies is the dependence of the public

welfare on the sort of men that manage affairs. Here the people themselves can have neither watch nor ward. There is no great public treasury that is not, despite all checks and guards of law, at the mercy of those who have it in charge; nor any policy that may not be fatally misdirected, before the people, be they ever so wise and attentive, can rally to its rescue.

Though this system intends to subordinate measures to men in democratic regard as a general rule, it is still expected that under it, whenever a worthy exigency shall arise, popular opinion will effectually assume the actual direction of affairs, reaching beyond its representative to the duties of that representative, and dictating, not only who shall make the laws, but what laws shall be made. By this I mean, that when such an issue as the right of secession from the Union, the annexation of Mexico, or war against Spain shall arise, the Representative Delegates of the people under this system will be chosen on that issue, and, through the several grades of Electoral Colleges, will convey the purposes of the nation to the headquarters of the nation. But nice subordinate questions will no longer trouble the deliberations of the people. These, it is believed, will a thousand times better be submitted to the selected intelligence that this system undertakes to put in authority, than be pooled, as now, in a party platform, and subjected to the scramble of interests, prejudices, and enthusiasms that characterizes our present politics.

It may be objected to this feature of my system

that it will not promote the "education" of the people in politics, but, rather, hinder it, by taking away its occasion and inducements. But it is impossible to hinder an impossibility. Political education of the mass of the people! Talk about making every man a chemist or a theologian, but do not talk about this. Men who would not willingly trust a jury to determine a trifling lawsuit confidently discourse about qualifying them by education for the right settlement of the innumerable difficult problems of modern politics! This delusion had some excuse at the era of the French Revolution, while the political capacity of the people had as yet had no sufficient modern test, and while it was still undetermined what the new diffusion or opportunity of knowledge through printing might do for them, but it has none now. For nigh a century politics has been the earnest study of the American people—as capable as any in the world—but who will say that we have learned much? Nothing can be more silly than to expect to qualify the average voter by education for passing on the many various issues that the politics of his city, his county, his State, and the nation constantly present. This is a breadth of accomplishment that the most industrious and devoted genius is hardly capable of. How long will it take the mass of your neighbors to get "educated" in the science of political economy, criminal law, municipal construction, pauperism, and no end of other such questions? Besides, whatever political education we may get is of no use to us so long as the Caucus and Convention select our rulers. It is of

no avail for the people of the State or city of New York to study the science of government while they are still destined to have aldermen and legislators who have not studied it.

(j) Office Tenure.

A new rule of Office Tenure is also here proposed — simple, uniform, and alone democratic. The proper term of office for legislative, executive, and judicial functionaries in their various grades has always been more or less a subject of dispute, but without arrival at any uniformity of practice, or fixed conclusion of logic. One man is put in authority for one year, another for two, another for six, another for fourteen, another till threescore years and ten, another for life, and another till his successor is appointed. So, some can be ousted for cause, and some without cause: some by various ways of impeachment and trial, and some by party force, and so on. The State of New York, between its Council of Appointment under the constitution of 1777, at whose will held the great majority of public officers throughout the State, and the present various regulation of the matter, has tried forty different terms of office, and as many ways of removal from office. Why should a federal senator be elected for six years, and a State senator for two ? or a President for one period, a governor for another, and a mayor for a third ? Why should the various functionaries of a city hold office for different terms ? or why should the county judge be

re-eligible, and not the county sheriff? At Washington policy has been repeatedly blocked because the President has one term of office, senators another, and representatives a third; the same in State capitols and city halls, all over the country.

In place of this senseless and injurious hodge-podge, the mixed result of accident, old tradition, and shallow device, I propose a single rule, that every public servant shall hold his place at the will of the power that appoints him.

That fixed terms of office are now of some little service, as a check to the rotation that parties and politicians constantly demand, is by no means denied; but it is contended that when these false influences shall be overthrown, as will surely be done by this system of elections, even that meagre usefulness will be at an end.

Let it be noticed, in illustration and support of this new rule, that it is the general custom in private business, and that the British ministry and every other successful cabinet in Europe holds office but from day to day. Ill, surely, in like instruction, would it have answered if the commanders of armies in our civil war had been appointed for a term of years, or had been removable only by formal trial and conviction.

No method but this can make democracy real. Now the people are sovereign only on election days, their supposed servants being their actual masters in the long interim between. But I make popular authority incessant. Time does not run against the king; and, if the people are to be king, their authority

must not be in abeyance for an hour. To get rid of an unworthy public functionary till his term expires is now slow and difficult, if not impossible: but this rule of Office Tenure furnishes an instant and perpetual court, where democracy will be at once complainant, judge, and executionary. The people are not only entitled to the best service, but they have a right to be satisfied with it, and to a quick opportunity to correct their mistakes. The mere suspicion of dereliction from duty in the mind of the appointing power should warrant the removal of any public officer. Let there be afterwards whatever inquiry, punishment, or restitution fair dealing may demand; but the general welfare should by no chance wait on the expiration of terms, the investigation of committees, or the slow judgment of courts. It should be "a word and a blow, and the blow first." Wrong to the individual is nothing: *salus populi suprema lex*.

Note that the Representative Elector of whatever rank will himself be subject to the same insecurity of station. This cannot but hold him the stronger to his duty; for, as to be chosen twice by his neighbors will raise him high in the scale of honor, so will it sink him low to have their confidence suddenly withdrawn. Hence encouragement to good, and great intimidation to evil motives in the discharge of his august and pregnant function.

It need not be feared that this new law of Office Tenure will hinder public station from being worthily filled. It will be a terror only to sloth, venality, and incompetence. Patriotism, industry, capacity, and

honorable ambition will all the more eagerly seek employ in this the most important and distinguished of occupations, as having much more to hope than to fear from such a rule.

As there will be here no technical restraint on removal from office, so will there be no artificial inducement towards it; and the combined result cannot but be that, on the whole, Office Tenure will be prolonged. Seldom, we may be certain, will the lot-drawn popular constituency call itself together anew to change its Representative Elector without some urgent reason, nor will any College of Electors hastily discharge its appointees, to the discredit of its own judgment or motives. To eat one's own words is not an appetizing dish. Neither when at well-defined periods new Colleges of Electors are chosen will they be likely to disturb the public service by wantonly introducing into it untested men. The same reasoning that promises that they will put good men into office guarantees that they will keep them there.

An incidental advantage of this plan is, that when a public officer dies in the midst of his term, as have three of our Presidents in this very generation, his function need not long devolve upon a deputy, vice-president, or lieutenant-governor who was never chosen to perform it, as it does now, sometimes to the serious disturbance of public counsels and popular quiet, but can in a moment be properly supplied at a new convening of them that appointed him.

Another is, that when every public functionary shall hold his place till his successor is appointed,

according to the intention here, the "ties" between parties, ambitions, or interests, that now sometimes leave important offices vacant, will effect no such interference with the public welfare.

(k) This System Involves a Beneficial Concentration of Authority.

Sovereignty in this country is now divided up, and its several parts are constantly at sixes and sevens. As held Calhoun, and, I think, Jefferson before him, the federal constitution fixes no supremacy of authority among the different departments of government. It is the like in States and cities. All about the judge enjoins the executive, the executive thwarts the legislature, and the legislature ignores them both; and so on round the other way. Thus democratic authority has no head, and member wars against member. But under this system the Colleges of the people's Representatives will have absolute control over every department of the public service. Thus many of the internecine wars between antagonistic interests and powers that have so constantly marred the history of governments, free or attempting to be free, will surely be escaped.

(l) Official Responsibility.

These features of my system carry with them an altered shape of Official Responsibility. They give it (1) a needed singleness, (2) a better direction, and (3) a new sanction.

(1) As our government is now constituted a

public man often is responsible to the President who nominates him, to the Senate that must confirm him, to the House of Representatives which can impeach him, and to party, Political Organization, and popular opinion besides. But under this system every high functionary will be responsible, immediately and only, to a College of Electors.

(2) This new direction of Official Responsibility may look alarming, as doing away in some degree with that popular oversight of the public service which it is traditional and customary to regard as the main security of democratic rule; but the fact is, that in so largely discarding that guardianship I but strike out a thing that is mythical, unsuited, or worn out. Certain it is, that in any large constituency there is not and cannot be, even if there ought, any effective responsibility of public men to the mass of the voting population. It is not to this that they really owe their elevation now, or must look for support or advancement, but to themselves, to party, to the league of politicians, and to the influence of special interests. Not to repeat my discussion of other points, it is notorious that public place is now far more dependent on those narrow interests and purposes that have the advantage of concentration and organization than on general diffused sentiment and concern. To this advantage is it due that labor unions and granges, turn and turn about with railroads, banks, and other corporations, have largely had the mastery of affairs for the last fifty years;—as when, to illustrate the argument by a single example, a master stevedore or manufacturer

who can bring a score of his employees to the Caucus or the polls controls the alderman of his ward. Seldom does the legislator care much what the mass of his constituents think about his course. Sometimes, to be sure, he goes through the form of making report to them by a public speech or letter when he comes home from Washington or Albany, but he never forgets that his final audit is at the counter of politicians.

A good deal is prated about the power of public opinion, and the responsibility of government to it, and what it is going to do with politicians if they don't look out; but the fact is that sober public opinion is about as impotent in New York as it is in St. Petersburg. Public opinion in the long run has a certain influence on the conduct of affairs, as a kind of cosmic element, but in the calculations of the present hour it might about as well be left out in this country. It is the tool, and not the master in our politics.

Suppose a public man to acknowledge his responsibility to public opinion, and to desire to obey it; how will he find out what it is? It has now no voice of its own. Surely he cannot learn its purposes from the public prints; for these, when not the mere organs of party or the advertisement of politicians, are but a gain-seeking proprietorship, no more speaking for democracy than the *Churchman*, the *Freeman's Journal*, the *Independent*, or the *Methodist* represents the genius of catholic Christianity. As little can he discover it in the proceedings of popular assemblies, whether collected by politics

or benevolence, in the interests of laborers or of taxpayers, the producer or the consumer, of the whiskey dealer or the drunkard's wife; for such demonstrations are always partial, usually artificial, and often mercenary. Always, moreover, it is the shifting and surface elements in public opinion that are most conspicuous; and he who follows no better guide will surely imperil what he has in charge,—as when one, navigating the rapids of the St. Lawrence, watches its tumbling eddies, but sees not the direction of the main stream, wrecking his ship. But under this system public opinion will be readily found, as collected from its present vagueness and dispersion, and centred in the Colleges of Representative Electors. Add, that the intelligence and virtue above the common which these Colleges may fairly be expected to possess, and which can but rise with their rising grades, will make accountability to them far more welcome to every worthy public servant than dependence on popular ignorance, prejudice, and caprice.

(3) Finally, Responsibility looks toward authority and authority is nothing without sanctions. Human nature feels accountable only to him who has the power to reward or to punish. Little sanction of either sort have the purposes of democracy now. To be sure we can vote for any man we please; but to do this, unless he is first nominated by the politicians of the Party Caucus and Convention, is to waste our vote. As to punishment for official misconduct of its various sorts by removal from office, fines, imprisonment, and so forth, our

power is even more shadowy and scant. Who ever knew an official head to fall into the basket because the people demanded it ?

But by its peculiar law of Office Tenure this system bestows on us the instant power not only to create but to destroy ; to honor and reward, or to punish and disgrace. Here, surely, is a sanction that will make the public service responsive to the public will.

(m) A New Centre of Responsibility.

Moreover, not only is the office-holder now responsible to nobody in particular but nobody is responsible for him. He is a sort of *filius nullius*. Whenever, in his misbehavior, the question of paternity comes up, politicians hide behind party, party behind politicians, and the people behind both, each accusing the others. Nor shall I deny that each of them has some reason to refuse full responsibility for him. But, under this system, whenever the wrong man gets into power, it will be easy to know in every form and stage of democratic authority who is to blame. In all the Representative Elector alone will have to answer for the conduct of public functionaries. Omnipotent as he clearly will be within his sphere, he will have no subterfuge from full responsibility.

Surely the higher public service under these conditions will be permeated by a sterner sense of accountability than has yet pervaded government in any age or country,—to its great purification and advancement beyond a doubt.

This strong settlement of responsibility will by no means involve democracy in subjugation to seated office. From the lot-drawn Caucus of the people up to the highest grade of the Electoral Convention and down through every department of political administration, public opinion, however varying, will still maintain a sure supremacy; for the Colleges of Electors will not only be chosen afresh at defined periods, but will all the while be liable to renovation at the will of their constituencies.

(n) The Representative Elector a Watchman.

This attitude of the Elector will devolve upon him a duty of great significance, now unassigned. It will belong specifically to him, as it did to the Roman Consul, to take care "lest the republic should suffer harm." At present this is nobody's business in particular; and, by consequence, nobody attends to it much.

(o) The College of Representative Electors a Balance Wheel of Political Movement.

Our present system, whether in its two houses of legislation, its veto power, its tripartite distribution of political function among the makers, the judges, and the executors of the law, or anywhere else, furnishes no true regulator of democratic career. Despite these devices the wheels of political movement roll sometimes too fast, and sometimes too slow, sometimes backward and sometimes forward, nor follow any settled track. This defect, it is

believed, is here supplied by the authoritative station of the Representative Elector. To him, a fair and full representative of social interest, sentiment, and influence, reform can confidently address its claims for due advancement, and conservation for just protection. While prevalent opinion will be fully accommodated, and all proper flexibility of laws and institutions ensured, this removed authority will stand like a rock against wanton and hasty change.

(p) This System of Elections Simple.

Finally, this method of democracy is supremely simple. Fairly to compare it in this respect with what we now live under, we must remember that the latter virtually comprises not only all the variety of election proceedings and methods of appointment that are known to the constitution and the statute book, but also the preliminary work of the Caucus and Convention, and of all the rest of the machinery and methods of Political Organization.

Tiers État.

It was well remarked by Dugald Stewart in his life of Adam Smith, when defending the claims of that philosopher to originality, that "in proportion as any conclusion approaches the truth the number of previous approximations to it may reasonably be expected to be multiplied." Accordingly, the history of government, from the various ingenuities of Greece and Venice to the latest constitutions of

France, Roumania, and Brazil, abounds in approximations to this system. To recount any considerable share of them would be a tedious task. But there is one that comprises so many of the features of my plan as to deserve especial notice;—the more, because it was approved by its works, and thus furnishes for the scheme to some extent the argument of actual success.

The best display, beyond a doubt, that political society in its larger spheres has ever made was in the Third Estate of France, which assembled at Versailles on the first of March, 1789, and which, the Estates of the nobility and clergy for a time refusing co-operation, became the celebrated National Assembly. Says Alison, who was a most unwilling witness to any virtue or success of democracy: "Among its members it numbered a great proportion of the talent and almost all the energy of France." All the testimony of observers, together with the verdict of subsequent inquiry, is to the same effect.

But its recorded works are its sufficient eulogy. It does not belong here to discuss the inexhaustible theme of the French Revolution, but I fear no contradiction when I say that for patriotism, purity, understanding, moderation, magnanimity, and every other virtue that should characterize public bodies the French Constituent Assembly of 1789 is entitled to the palm. It was foremost in its temper, foremost in its prudence, and foremost in its success. Remember its provocations, remember the chaos and difficulty of the times, remember the old oppressions

that it broke up, and the liberty, equality, and fraternity that it inaugurated, and tell me who has done better, or who has done so well. It made but two material mistakes: the first in forbidding to its members a second candidacy, and the other in utterly changing for its successor the manner of its own election. But for these two errors, and especially the latter, the horrid and disastrous scenes that are apt to be alone associated by ignorant people with the French Revolution, would never have happened.¹

When we consider how suddenly this body was called together, and how well they discharged their arduous and unaccustomed task; when we compare their solid discourse, as preserved in the chronicles of the times, with the vapidity that spreads through legislative halls in general; and when we remember that what they did and said is still the study, the example, and the inspiration of popular endeavor all over Europe, we may well inquire how it was that such a prodigy was brought into existence. How came it that a people, utterly inexperienced for more than two centuries in political function, should choose, at the first attempt, the best men among them for their political representatives? The answer is, that the members of the Third Estate were elected substantially after the manner here proposed for all high functionaries: that is, not by the people themselves, nor by their

¹ The reader will remember that this body was dissolved long before the Reign of Terror, and replaced by a crew elected as we now elect.

immediate representatives, but by the representatives of those representatives.

This fact, so full of instruction, is omitted or slurred over by Alison, Thiers, and all the other formal historians that I have access to, but it is clearly indicated by Carlyle in the first chapter of the fourth book, Part I., of his *French Revolution*, and by Messrs. Erckmann-Chatrian, in *The Story of a Peasant* (Vol. i., p. 135, *et seq.*, Beeton's Library Edition), where will be found the very proclamation of the King that called this body together and ordered the manner of its election. The document is too long to be transcribed here, and in some particulars its meaning, as translated, is somewhat obscure; but this much pertinent to my purpose can be clearly gathered from it, viz.: (1) That the voters of each parish and community were to meet at the "guild hall" and elect deputies who should constitute "the assembly of the third estate" of the town; (2) that this body should appoint deputies at the rate of "one for every hundred houses," to represent it at the convention of the "principal bailiwick"; which, in turn (3), was to send a fourth part of its number to "represent it at Paris."

Commenting on that compound system of representation, and seasoning entertainment with instruction, as is their wont, these charming authors remark that "it will be observed that instead of naming, as we do now, deputies of whom we knew nothing . . . we chose, as was sensible, from one's own village. . . . Those persons then selected the most sensible, the most able, the boldest, and best educated

to sustain our appeals to the king, the princes, the nobles, and the bishops. In this fashion we had what was good. Look at what our deputies did in '89, and what these do to-day; then you will see whether it was better to have folks who were chosen because they were known, or men whom you elect because the prefect recommends them to you." Substitute in the last sentence "politician" for "prefect," *et de te fabula narratur*. On a subsequent page these writers, as if to anticipate another feature of this system, advise that electors should have it in their power instantly to deprive of his seat every deputy who might prove false to his trust.

CHAPTER V

CORRECTIVE EFFECTS OF THIS SYSTEM

THE high expectation of the happy working of this method of democratic construction which cannot but be raised by the foregoing study of its special features and its philosophy becomes assurance when we consider certain corrections of our present evil state that will surely attend its employment.

(a) Election Vices Corrected.

In the first place it will put a sudden end to all our election troubles,—to fraud in its various forms, to uncertainties, unnecessary and demoralizing expenditure, and to distracting turmoil.

(1) The ballot-box, traditional panoply of popular rights, has turned out to be a poor security against fraudulent and doubtful elections. Since Political Organizations have come to supervise and certify the polls, the records of democratic will are no longer to be trusted. What with fraudulent naturalization and registration, personation, repeating and colonization, false counting, false returns, and false records, together with unscrupulous partisan arbitrament in disputed cases, we are often obliged to doubt whether we are living under our

lawful rulers, and even sometimes know that we are not. There is little question, for example, that in the State of New York not so many years ago a governor and several members of the supreme court were "counted in,"—to use a term which the frequency of a crime till lately unknown to the country made it necessary to invent. There is as little, by the confession of many Republicans themselves, that in at least two of the States at the Presidential election of 1876 the vote of the people was so manipulated as to make a majority out of a minority in the final result. In February, 1873, a committee of the federal senate, a majority of which, viz.: Anthony, Logan, Carpenter, and Trumbull, were partisans of the administration, unanimously reported, after a careful investigation at the place of the crime, that the returns of the Louisiana election of the year before were "fabricated" by the functionaries of the federal government. In the same State, and in South Carolina at a later date (1877), the question who was elected governor was decided by the "policy" of the incoming President, without any legal inquiry or determination whatsoever. These instances, among the most conspicuous, are none the less significant because not the most recent.

(2) Partly from this cheating, but partly also from the clumsiness of our election methods, comes frequent uncertainty in election results. In a recent Congress above forty seats were contested in the House, and five in the Senate. This is a greater number of doubtful cases than the whole first half of our history presented. In Congress,

State legislatures, and city councils the public business is sometimes at a standstill for weeks, the power of either party to move it being lacking in consequence of the number of disputed seats. In several of the Southern States since their reconstruction it has half the time been impossible to say who was the lawful governor. In several instances, as well North as South, each party has had its separate legislature or common council, and sometimes its separate polls. To settle these difficulties the bench is frequently called in, sometimes to its own demoralization, and injunctions, mandamuses, and quo warrantos fly thick about, federal authority crossing swords with State, or party judges with each other, making confusion worse confounded.

These difficulties were not foreseen by the founders of our institutions. They intended that in every election the majority should rule, but they did not foresee that it would often come to be disputed on which side the majority might be. They directed that the President should give his support to State authority whenever that might be endangered, but they did not suppose that that authority would itself be sometimes in doubt. They undertook to guarantee republican governments to all the States, but they did not imagine that in the same State two governments might both claim to be republican.

We had in the Presidential election of 1876 a warning of our danger from disputed elections that makes other instances almost superfluous, and that must fill every thoughtful patriot with apprehension. Only the memory of the Civil War then

prevented civil war, and only by going outside of the constitution was the constitution saved. When such a crisis shall again occur, of which there is every four years increasing danger, there will be no arbiter but the sword. Many ways have lately been suggested of mending the particular defect in our election system out of which this peril grew: but let tinkers beware lest they make the matter worse. They may be sure that no patching will answer, and that the difficulty will not be effectually remedied till the plan of elections here proposed is brought into use.

What with its promiscuous polling, its superintendence by the appointees of politics, its discretionary certification, and its distant record, the present method of elections but furnishes invitation to the unscrupulousness of politicians, the recklessness of party, and the usurpations of office, and makes uncertainty certain. But the system here set forth leaves no possible chance for fraudulent procedure or doubtful result. It needs no argument to show that in the conference of the popular constituency for the choice of a Primary Representative Elector, democracy will be its own sufficient watch, ward, arbiter, and recorder; and that in the public sessions and *vis à voce* proceedings of the several Colleges of Electors cheating and uncertainty of whatever sort will find no possible room, or, should, perchance, the right to office be ever in doubt, a mere recall of the Primary Constituency, or of the College, would settle the question. These advantages alone should suffice to ensure the adoption of this system.

(3) The expense of elections is getting to be no small item in the public charges. The election of November, 1898, including the primary election, cost the city of New York for registry, advertising, the rent, furnishing, and repair of polling places, for ballot-boxes and special police, for clerks, inspectors, and so on, nearly \$700,000. Accurate figures make the cost of a general election in the State of New York (1898) above two dollars for each voter. A special election that events may call for is almost as costly as a general election for a constituency. It costs my own little city of four thousand voters about a dollar a vote each year to be in this way a tender to small self-seeking politicians in the distribution of offices. These are fair samples of what local democracy, at least in cities, now has to pay to get itself superintended at the polls. To this is to be added what the federal government dispenses to marshals, commissioners, and so forth for overseeing the election contests in legislatures and before courts,—and I know not how much else. In the whole, and on the average, each taxpayer pays not less than the value of a day's work every year for the watching and verification of elections,—and by no means gets the business well done after all.

With the debauchment of our politics this outlay constantly swells. A clerk or an inspector of elections used to be paid a dollar or two: now this acolyte of politics gets several times as much. It has become quite an object for the ward politician to rent a room for a registration or polling place,—and to get it afterwards put in better repair than it

was before at the public cost. To supply fuel to warm the fingers of canvassers, or kerosene to illuminate their long deliberations, is a familiar item among the smaller profits of politics.

Of this expenditure not one tenth part, it is obvious, will be needed, or can find any possible opportunity, under the system of elections here proposed.

A like saving will there be of the people's time. To say nothing of the vital business of attending preliminary Caucuses, and of annual registration, I have had to go to the polls three times a year, viz.: at the November State election, at the March municipal election, and at the June school election. But when this system is got well running I shall be called on to go there but once in several years.

(4) Under this system the miserable turmoil that now precedes and accompanies elections will be put an end to, and democracy will work out its destiny in the utmost quietness and peace. The political campaign is now a scene of tempest and tumult where the natural face of things is changed, and whatever integrity belongs to popular sense and justice is lost in the blaze of party lights and the excitement of personal rivalries and attachments. Prejudices are strengthened, and pugnacity kindled anew. Solid repute vanishes like smoke, while false grows like the gourd. Industry and business are interrupted, while idleness, dissipation, and disorder hold a muster. Not seldom election-day has proved a day of violence and riot.

But nothing of any such sort, it is evident, will

ever attend the expression of democratic will after the methods here proposed.

(b) Purification of the Polls from the Refuse of Society.

But I expect from the employment of this system an improvement in elections more important even than the good that will come from the correction of their present fraudulence, uncertainty, expensiveness, and turbulence. I look to see the polls cleared from the attendance of that large class of voters who now come there from no good motive, but whose ballots weigh as much as ours. The thousands of ignorant foreigners who are naturalized and brought to the polls at the expense and instigation and for the use of parties and politicians; the thousands who come there to sell their votes; the hundreds of thousands who have no stake in public affairs, and feel no intelligent interest in them, but who are moved in their political action by party prejudice, religious or class bigotry, excitement, personal ill will or good will, or other illegitimate influences—all these, within a brief period, will voluntarily disappear from this arena, lacking inducement to attend there, and be dropped from the register of voters; and the government of the country will be left to the honest, the intelligent, the patriotic, and the interested, with whom it belongs. This class, on the other hand, who now so often stay away, will come to this reformed and purified Caucus in full force, because now for the first time both their votes and their influence will

have due weight. Thus will democracy be raised even above itself.

(c) Political Organization will not Survive a Moment the Introduction of this System.

The Caucus will be powerless, the Convention a superfluity, the Committee's occupation will be gone. I turn upon the usurper his own guns, manned, not by a party, but by the whole people.

(d) With Political Organization will go Professional Politicians,

its ministers and beneficiaries. The major purposes of democracy will be fully gathered and empowered by the very operation of this system; and the people, no longer requiring the aid of these interested managers, will no longer submit to their guidance.

(e) Office-Seeking will be Restored to Decency.

An ambition for the honor, influence, or even the profits of public life is no unworthy motive. But private pursuit should wait on public request. He who would have an upper seat at the table of democracy should attend the motions of the master of the feast. This was once the prevailing custom in our politics: but it is quite the other way now. What is worse, office is hardly ever sought after except for the money that it will bring, *per fas aut nefas*. The "place-hunting" that brought such ignominy on British politics in the last century is now the chief spur of ours. It is the first-born of

Political Organization, feeds at its breast, and will perish with it.

(f) An End will be put to Corruption at the Polls.

These sinister influences got rid of, purity will not fail to return to politics. Venality there has now spread from one end of the land to the other, and through nigh every grade of society. Said the New London (Conn.) *Telegram*, a reputable paper, commenting on a State election in that town : " Among those who unblushingly sold themselves for a few dollars were young men connected with respectable families, and educated at the High School." It is credibly reported that at a certain spring election in New Hampshire, which it was known that a few hundred votes would decide, and which was contested with unusual warmth by politicians as being both indicative and influential with regard to the result of the ensuing Presidential campaign, many a man sold his vote for enough to support him for a year. A fine change in a century, this way of getting a living, from the fashion of John Stark and Ebenezer Webster! This in New'England, famed for democratic virtue! But who will buy the voter in my Conference of the People ?

(g) Taxation Reduced.

It can hardly be doubted that under this system the present enormous and constantly increasing rate of taxation will be greatly reduced ; especially because much of it is due to the incessant demand by

the political fraternity for more offices to distribute, higher pay, and new subjects of legislation,—a demand gratified by themselves,—and a part to the gross incompetence, or the corruption, that now so widely prevails throughout the official domain.

All the same, the better class of public functionaries that we shall get, the right man being put in the right place, will enable municipalities profitably to take charge of certain kinds of public business which, as things now are, prudence refuses to them.

But an evil deeper, more vicious, and more ancient than any of these will be reached and corrected by the operation of this system, for under its influence,

(h) Parties and Party Spirit will Fast Perish.

So constant a companion of free society has the evil genius of Party been that the mere student of history will probably laugh at the promise to exorcise it. It is argued, too, that parties are a necessity. But everything that is is a necessity under the existing conditions. In this sense the fungous and eating cancer is as necessary as the healthy tissues that it invades. So, parties, I admit, are an inevitable accompaniment of democracy as now constructed: but I deny that they are of its essence, and I claim that by the operation of this system they will be speedily cast out among the rubbish of the past. That differences of opinion on public questions will forever continue, and personal mastery be contended for, and that, at some critical moments in the life of communities, adverse flags will still be flung out, is by no means doubted: but it is

believed that such continuous division of the people into opposing political camps as we now constantly witness will not long survive the application of this method of democracy.

Granted that in the earlier stages of political society, and while the fundamental questions of right and power were still unsettled; that in Great Britain, where a steady conflict still obtains between reform and conservatism; that in France, where the State is in unstable equilibrium between its republican form and military autocracy, diverse fundamental ideas of government; and that wherever race contends with race, nationality with nationality, or Church with State, as now they do in many parts of Europe,—granted that in such cases party has a certain legitimacy, it can claim none whatever in this country at the present time. Here is no dispute about liberty, equality, or nationality; nor conflict between conservatism and reform; the State does not meddle with religion, nor religion threaten the State. Under this serene sky the war of parties has no more just place than it has in science, art, or literature, from whose enlightened schools it has long since been expelled.

Party is but a wry, artificial distraction of democracy, and not its native symmetrical and harmonious shape. It is proof of this, that, when any vital matter comes in issue, the mass of a community almost invariably gather on one side. Thus in our great sectional war the body of the people, whether at the South or at the North, were of one mind with regard to its prosecution. Party spirit sunk as love

of country rose. To claim the victory of the North in that conflict as a party triumph has no support in facts. Rather was it in despite of party that the Union was saved. The most that parties can boast of is that one of them precipitated the war and the other delayed its conclusion.

It is the fashion to regard party contentions as the natural throes that democracy must endure while she brings her new beneficial conceptions into life. But there is nothing in the history of this country to warrant this idea. Not from party, but from individual efforts, sprang whatever has been creditable in our politics. I know not what benefit party has brought us that would not have come without party. Not the forlorn habiliments of struggling truth, but the prevailing fashion, is what parties wear. They concern themselves about the new demonstrations of the hour only so far as they think they can profit by them. The law of party is to stand by party. Not what is right, but what is expedient, is its interrogation. In obedience to these rules, it welcomes selfishness and fanaticism to its court, while patriotic endeavor and high intelligence stand begging without the gates.

But it is said that parties are needed to watch and restrain each other. Their value in this respect, if they have any, is greatly overrated. Seldom has power been hindered, by party opposition, from carrying out its extremest purposes. On the contrary, party most often excites party to new excesses. Party furnishes neither much safeguard of public counsels nor check on public vice. Its spirit

was high in this country along before the civil war; but it was not in closely contested States, like New York, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania, where the watchfulness of party would naturally be most eager, that government was wisest and purest, but in South Carolina, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Virginia, where the domination of the Whig or of the Democratic party was year after year substantially undisputed. Municipal politics, on a wide survey, would tell about the same story. The chief reason of this is, that when one party easily has its way, Political Organization, which is the main stem of public vices, is little needed by the major, and is of no avail to the minor party. Besides, when party contest is close, party spirit runs high, and official crimes and shortcomings are condoned and winked at, if not approved of, even by men of decency.

But, if party watching is needed, who shall watch the watchmen? The watch is now leagued with the thieves. Recent revelations have abundantly shown that Democratic and Republican politicians hunt in couples, and amicably divide between them the conquered quarry. Ostentatiously disputing in public, the managers of parties fraternize in a common guild. The stolen profits of the Credit Mobilier operation were tracked in about equal proportion to the pockets of Democrats and Republicans.

The fact is, that about the only watch upon the conduct of public functionaries that is now of any effect, is what is exercised over each other by rivals within the party of administration itself. Here scrutiny has its best opportunity, accusation a

hearing, and competition some fairness of field. Add, that it is so much the custom of opposing partisans to lie about each other that a just complaint from a party opponent receives little more attention or credence among the people themselves than a false.

I concede to party in this country, at the present time, the single merit of impeding the influence of seated office, which, without this hindrance, must soon become able to re-elect itself.

But, while the reputed benefits of party are almost wholly imaginary, its injuries are solid. It is the ancient marplot of popular counsels, the family quarrel of free government, continually distracting what should be united, and retarding, afflicting, and debauching the whole career of democracy. It is the father of unjust prejudice and false reports, of soured neighborhood intercourse, and even of persecution and civil war with all their horrid train. By the obligation of dependence and the sympathy of fellowship, it leads public men to keep an unpatriotic faith, since to be created by party is to be the creature of party. It is the grand conspirator against political truth, for, to the partisan, the fair consideration of public questions is already foreclosed. Of what infinite service would it be to the home interests of all our States and cities if the national partisanship which now so distracts the public mind in all elections could be got rid of! Nine voters out of ten notoriously are more governed in local elections by the party politics of a candidate than by any question of his fitness to manage local interests.

Nevertheless, at the back of this spurious potentate not only are public functionaries established, but public policy is shaped. We had startling evidence how it still presides over our greatest deliberations when a commission of higher selection than any known to laws and constitutions was set to decide the Presidency, and divided in their vote on a straight party line,—a result that there were hundreds of chances against if the influence of partisanship had been excluded from the case. At Washington, in State capitals, and in city halls, it is not the majority of the whole representation of the people, but the majority of the dominant party, assembled in caucus, that customarily decides every important public question. Congress in the Presidential year is now notoriously occupied with making party capital. In the same interest States are shamelessly gerrymandered, and desert territories have been converted into States. Not seldom the rivalry of parties brings the public business to a standstill, and it goes on only when spurred by a new force of corruption.

Whatever virtues party may claim perish with the triumph of party. "No party," said Mr. John Bright, "can be economical when in power." Neither can it remain incorrupt. Witness the rot of virtue in the Democratic party between Jackson and Buchanan; and its still swifter decay in the Republican party in the eight years' continuous holding of power in Grant's terms as President. The best account that can be given of party since the war is as a contest between a fading fanaticism

and a reviving Tammany, each side still grafting upon its own the vices of the other.

On the whole, it is logical to believe that no solution of our present quandary will prove good unless it clears the field of politics from party strife. That this can any way be done will naturally be doubted. An element with which democratic society has been so permeated may well seem essential and ineradicable. But the past does not always prefigure the future. Jupiter and all his satellites fell down before a greater God.

Ours was the first constitution that ever excluded religion from politics. Even the freethinker Hume thought the church must belong to the State. This has now been found to be a mistake. So will it prove with regard to parties in a rightly constructed republic. They will prove no more necessary than a State religion.

Whether this system will have the force to put an end to parties will depend, (1) on how solid is their basis; (2) on the strength of the hold they have on the affections of the people; and (3) on the virtue of the plan itself as a counteraction of the false influences that are now the chief support of party spirit and Party Organization.

(1) To form a sufficient ground for a division of democracy into two parties, some principle or measure of overwhelming significance must be at stake. But only at long intervals does this occur, and certainly there is nothing of that sort here now. On the contrary, a dozen questions of nigh equal seriousness, but each governed by a different law, are in

dispute in the several fields of government; and, logically, there should be as many party divisions, instead of but one.

(2) Party has no deep hold on the general mind. There is of late a great change in this respect. Said a veteran politician of note: "Forty years ago every man voted with his party: 'split tickets' and 'past-es' were unknown." It is not so now. The great majority of us, as has already been remarked, care little for politics, except to have the public business well conducted, and are conscious of a far deeper interest in local and non-partisan than in national issues. We stay inside of party, simply because our votes will count for nothing outside. The most that intelligent patriotism now hopes from one party is to defend it from the other. We assemble ourselves under the Republican or the Democratic flag, as in mediæval Europe the peasantry huddled beneath the shelter of baronial castles, not from love, but for security against a worse oppressor. Only for some inferior minds does party still remain a chain of superstition, cast about their necks by a political priesthood, who use in aid of their selfish purposes the contentiousness of human nature, every real or imagined diversity of interests, and a hellful of lies.

(3) Finally, if party among us have so feeble a foothold, as well in popular favor as in reason, it should not be deemed to be a necessary feature of democracy, nor inexpugnable to human device. This plan undertakes to reduce its ancient hold by seizing upon a more commanding site, and

garrisoning it with a mightier power. The assiduous cultivation by politicians of certain divergencies of popular opinion will fail of fruit when their art shall be confronted, as it will be under this plan, by the spontaneous and ready empowerment of major public sentiment.

Recall, in this regard, that under this system the pedigree of politics takes its start in an assembly of neighborhood voters, for the purpose of choosing a neighbor to act for them in the matter of a class of interests which it is impracticable for them to manage individually. Surely, these will not allow the distant issues of the federal capital alone to array one half of them against the other, to the neglect of questions far more important to them that lie nearer home. Common sense, and the necessities of the situation, will force us to vote for the man in whom we have most confidence, and who will best represent us in our general views, feelings, and interests. This the more, because the ballots will not tell directly, as they do now, on the result of a party struggle. In this arena compromise will be felt to be necessary, and the spirit of conciliation be encouraged. Often the worst quarrellers agree when brought face to face before their acquaintances.

As little will party trouble the subsequent stages of this procedure. What is refused at the root can never appear in the branch. The Colleges of Representative Electors are but an embodiment and higher expression of the general will. When partisanship shall disappear from the concourse of the

people, it will no longer be seen in the wider fields of public authority. If this jack-o-lantern shall cease to mislead the average voter, we surely need not fear that it will continue to delude his selected representatives.

When Parties and Political Organization are put an end to

(i) The Influence of Office will be Abated,

for it will have no special flag, no means of concentration, and no allies.

By the same means the growing tendency to

(j) Centralization will be Arrested.

It is in the interest of parties and politicians alone that city halls are now dictated to from the State capitols, and that State capitols revolve about the White House, threatening to convert our democracy into a satrapy.

Party Organization has begotten in this country a deeper Centralization of political power than is written in constitutions or statutes. All our history shows that it is impossible to keep up one set of parties on municipal questions, another on State, and another on national. The last always overshadows the others, and makes foreign and irrelevant matters the cynosure of popular regard in every local election. Thus, in a very pregnant signification, we no longer have local government for local purposes. How the strength of the national party that he belongs to, or his favor with that party, will be affected, often more influences the course of the

local functionary than do the interests of the locality itself. This at least is a Centralization whose ill effects opinion cannot differ about, and which only this system of elections can eliminate from our politics.

(k) Evils of Legislation Checked.

Also will the present undue influence of special interest in legislation be destroyed. Now the fear of losing a few votes brings the lawmaker to promote or permit a heap of vicious legislation which, without the fear of losing votes, he would have no inducement to. But here all special interests are broken up, and the legislator is not directly responsible to the voter.

On the other hand, much beneficent legislation is blocked by the opposition of special, ignorant, and selfish interests, which would be released by the disintegration of such influences that is here secured.

(l) "Rotation in Office" will be Corrected.

This feature of our politics is such a novelty in the world that only a special American idiom furnishes a formula for its expression. Never in any other country, nor here till Party Organization assumed the throne, has the charge of public affairs, both high and low, been periodically passed round like a deal at cards, as if to give each gamester of politics an equal chance. This custom began under Andrew Jackson, who, observing that the actual working of our system did not equal expectation,

attributed the failure to a supposed tendency of office to debauch its holder, and proposed to purify the public service by a frequent sweeping-out. The suggestion looked plausible to the people and lovely to place-hunters: and "rotation in office" rapidly became a prime incentive, instrument, and watch-word of Political Organization. It has now become the settled practice, not only in federal, but in State and more local politics; and, not only between parties, but between factions, cliques, neighborhoods, conflicting interests, and personal rivalries within the party, each of them demanding its turn of official power, profit, and distinction.

Out of the twenty-five federal senators whose terms expire together only about one-half are returned again. In the present legislature of New York (1898) almost one-half of the senators and assemblymen are new members. The proportion is about the same all over the country. So, we have a new governor and a new mayor every year or two. The charge of the navy, of the public purse, of streets, prisons, and every other great public interest, is constantly handed over to novices and experimenters. Even the bench is falling into the same category.

Thus when by chance a man of qualification gets on the public stage, his part is almost certain to be taken from him before he has had time to become familiar with it, before practice has ripened his skill, or the audience of the people learned to appreciate it. Or, if he stay there long, his efforts are constantly thwarted by surrounding ignorance, his

abilities find scanty appreciation, and his just influence must be constantly rebuilt among the raw colleagues that rotation in office brings about him at every election. Poor career, surely, is there here for statesmanship, reward to industry, stimulus to noble motives, or warning against mean. Hardly anything has helped more than this to let down the charge of the commonwealth into unworthy hands, and make the public service often a derision.

The absurdity and wrongfulness of this usage of our politics are past expression. Imagine a bank exchanging its cashier, tellers, and book-keepers every year or two, as we do comptrollers, auditors, and other high treasury officials; or a railroad or manufacturing corporation appointing a new superintendent at each meeting of its stockholders; or the captain of a ship being taken from the fore-castle at every voyage. What can be more shameful to democracy than that the dower of the widow and the heritage of the orphan should be handed about among the young lawyers of the county, as they now are in this State, till each has had his opportunity and his party reward? or what more damaging than that the difficult business of the lawmaker should be constantly entrusted to hands untrained and untried? How far and wide the bad consequences of this folly reach, what waste, injustice, disaster, and profitless turmoil it breeds, how it hinders the correction of political evils, and maims democracy in its native faculty of progress, the world will never know, nor can common minds even imagine, until stability and experience shall lend

their neglected virtues to public administration, and make a contrast.

Every feature of my system of democratic construction is at war with this foolish and injurious rule. It is self-seeking Politicians, making use of Party zeal among the people, of which they themselves are the interested and principal promoters, and dividing the spoils that Organized combination alone enables them to secure, that bring about this constant and injurious change of legislators, executives, and judges: and, with the disappearance of Party, Political Organizations, and Politicians, this evil progeny of theirs will also disappear. Among the mass of the community there can be neither inducement nor desire for any change of public functionaries without good reason; and, when democracy is truly empowered, these may safely expect to stay in their places until they have forfeited the public confidence.

Meantime, there will be no impediment to change of officeholders. At present, not only are men turned out of office who ought to stay in, but those stay in who ought to be turned out: but, under the plan of Office Tenure here proposed, the public service, it is reasonably believed, will free itself day by day of each unworthy member.

(m) The Press Reformed.

From the introduction of this plan cannot but ensue great elevation and purification of the Newspaper Press. Far beyond schools and books, the

newspaper is the educator of the people. Without it, the mass of people would remain to-day nearly as deep in ignorance and superstition as they were two centuries ago. But, with all its benefits, the press is somewhat *feræ naturæ*, turning often upon democracy to wound it, and even inflicting a terrible madness. By its false sympathy with armed strikers it was chiefly to blame for the disastrous lawlessness that spread over the country more than once. As a party organ and the hired servant of politicians, which it now so largely is, there is no wrong that it may not be brought to defend, nor any righteous cause that it will not shamelessly forsake. It debauches its very debauchers, and parties and politicians themselves are often the worse for its communion.

But under the system here set forth who will buy its influence, or what profit will it find in lies? It will no longer be partisan when parties are abolished, nor the tool of politicians when politicians are no more. Then will it serve a better cause. The evil practices that it now follows are foreign and unwelcome to its native strain. It owns a higher instinct than to be the organ of demagogues, the instrument of conspirators, the weapon of hatred or fanaticism, or a cowardly waiter on events; and, when it shall be released from its present false obligations and artificial necessities, it will start forward, like Pilgrim freed from his pack of sin, upon a higher path.

(n) Saving of Energies.

The public mind will be saved from great waste of occupation and energy. The amount of time

and thought that the people now bestow on politics is indicated by the fact that their principal reading is the newspapers, of which about half the contents are political and partisan. Old religious enterprises, like the New York *Independent*, find it profitable to divide their columns between politics and piety. It would not be easy to find a mechanic, farmer, or professional man who studies the literature of his profession as closely as the literature of his party, though all his assiduity seldom enables him either to understand the business or to acquire a real share in the management of it.

The plan of elections here proposed does away with all this profitless waste. It asks of the voter no more than what he is easily capable of doing well. In this natural and logical construction of political society there will be no more occasion for him to worry himself about who shall be the next President than about who shall succeed Brigham Young; about what shall be done with criminals and paupers, than about who shall marry all the red-haired girls; about a sound currency, than about a supply of sweet flour in the market. The business of politics will attend to itself, and the general mind be set free to more profitable studies.

CHAPTER VI

THIS SYSTEM THE TRUE SCIENCE OF POLITICAL SOCIETY

THIS system pretends to do little more than to gather and employ the scattered members of ancient political truth. But it is claimed for it, not only that its several parts are sound, but that their combination is philosophical. If that be so, a thousand analogies will confirm its methods, and its use will be attended, not by stray and transient advantages merely, but by a perpetual accompaniment of beneficence. To survey it a moment in this broad regard may help to strengthen the basis of deduction.

(a) It makes Actual the Rule of the People.

That democracy is the government which nature designs can hardly be doubted. Without speculative argumentation, it is sufficient to remember that throughout history it has been in point of fact the instinctive endeavor of all the nobler races; and, especially, that in the supreme Caucasian family the current toward it has constantly gathered more and more strength ever since the art of printing arrived to inform and aid the general mind. If modern civilization be anything but a phantom, it

surely carries universal democracy within its womb. Even through the dirt-beclouded scarf-skin of present American politics may still be discerned the native loveliness of popular sovereignty. The principle of democracy is like that royal tree which, though wrenched and bruised in many storms, still holds a steadfast root and lifts its branching plumes above all rivalry. To me all the sap of nature seems ready to rush to its trunk whenever its swelling virtues shall be free to unfold themselves.

But democracy does not mean merely the equality of men before the law, but their actual political empowerment also. Our present system, like many others, writes in the statute book that the will of the people is sovereign: but the actual fact is that we are governed by a handful of volunteer conspirators. And, indeed, thus far in the history of the world, no lasting command over their own affairs has ever been anywhere achieved by any large community. Often falling to them by chance, or seized upon by instinct, power has always been loosely held, and has soon slipped from their grasp into the hands of more concentrated and watchful talents. This happened repeatedly in Greece and Rome; it has happened more than once to France within a century; it has happened to nigh all the other nations of Europe since present memory; and it is fast happening to us, although we seem to know it not.

But under this system the people will not fail to hold their grip on the substance of authority. Let critics tell, if they are able, what defective point

there is in the armor here provided for the public will where violence can break through or fraud insinuate itself. If the people rule not well, they will at least rule.

(b) A Due Subordination in Political Society Established.

But, supremely democratic as this system is, its limitation of direct popular function in all the wider spheres of government to the choice of a Representative Elector, in whose preferred integrity and wisdom all further authority is reposed, brings in also the everlasting principle of Subordination. "Order is Heaven's first law"; and there is no order without Subordination. Without it there is mutiny in armies, piracy on shipboard, and hell in families; and without it, equally, there is eternal warfare in political society. Deprived of this, democracy must forever imitate that derisive statue of it that Phidias cut,—a plenty of arms and legs, but no head.

It is one of the principal defects of our present system that it fails to make due account of the actual difference among men. It seems to intend, what never can and should not be, the equal rule of unequals. Democracy can never flourish on the mere enumeration of polls. The level that that would bring us to is a dead level. It must somehow contrive to measure its constituent members as well as count them. This is believed to be effected by the method of establishing authority that is here proposed.

Only to him who thinks one man as good as another will this seem a disadvantageous change; but let such prig of philanthropy remember that, if he claims to be as good as anybody else, he must also confess to being as bad. The sentiment of the rightful equality of all men in political authority is at best but a mixture of self-conceit and blear-eyed sympathy. In the lack of any right guidance of public opinion it has of late been peculiarly effusive in this country. But a reaction has begun, and every thinking man would now be glad to see an honest mastery established, even though he himself should turn out to be a subject. Surely no believer in popular sovereignty can complain of a supremacy that the mass of the people are equally free to establish and to cast down, as will be that of my Colleges of Representative Electors.

This law of Subordination, as belongs to its native virtuousness, was the first to raise its head in the organization of political society. "A person or set of persons," says Walter Bagehot, "must first be had to defer to, though who he is, by comparison, hardly signifies." Its import never ceases. Says Carlyle in this sense, with his usual pointedness of expression: "The ultimate question is: 'Can I kill you or can you kill me?'" This ferocious writer and sharp critic had a keen sense of the ends desired, though no inventor of means. To substitute peaceful adjustment for such severe criterion is the constant and still unsolved problem of civilization. It is expected to be accomplished here by the logical and systematic empowerment of the mightier—

whether in wit, muscle, or fortune — and the quiet submission of the weaker elements in political society. The method is in accord with the primeval law of natural selection, alike in interests, ideas, and persons, and is therefore a true ally of stability, peace, and progress. Based on the eternal doctrine of equal rights, and yet giving free scope to every new influence, it will both establish what is strong in the present, and give quick announcement to every change that time shall give birth to.

In point of fact, every government, in its inner knot, necessarily employs this principle. It is as impossible for political society to get along as a mere co-operation of equals as for a machine shop or a store. Moreover, it is as natural and necessary for the mass of men to be virtual subjects in politics as it is to be pupils and imitators in art, science, fashion, and religion. The organization of an army is the oldest, and perhaps the final, model, in no narrow sense, of regulated government. The most successful nationalities of our period are impregnate with this doctrine. In Great Britain every important movement, both in legislation and in administration, for conservation or reform, obeys a narrow cabinet, if not the Prime Minister alone. So in Germany, Belgium, and Scandinavia. It is largely because neither the city, the State, nor the nation has here a head that our democracy so straddles about, or accepts a self-elected, irresponsible, and lawless boss.

This law of Subordination, it is worthy of remark, is especially useful to the commonalty. Nature's

magnates will always be able to take care of themselves, however government may be constituted, but the mass of men constantly need the protection and guidance of superior intelligence and energy. At bottom, the domestic brute is hardly more dependent on the interested care of a superior species. Accordingly, it is a familiar fact that nowhere else are the lower sort of folks so constantly prosperous as when they stay long in the employ of uncommon intelligence and force.

In contradiction to all this, our present system of elections makes the wise man theoretically, and often in fact, of no more weight in the determination of affairs than the foolish man, the solid and reputable citizen than the pauper or the loafer, the constable than the thief, a Washington than the meanest man that crawls. Had our present plan of government no other defect, it could beget naught else but degraded policy and disordered career. Democracy can never do deeds worthy of itself until it has furnished a better guidance than the narrow intelligence and vacillating will of the masses, which the existing system of elections would make its lawful directors.

Our present volunteer party organizations, vicious as they are, do something toward the correction of this defect in the law. It is better far to trust the officering and policy of the State to the average convention of politicians, bad as they are, than to any mass-meeting of the people at large, or to organized grangerdom or labor unions. I undertake to make that correction complete and compulsory by putting

the immediate establishment of all high authority into the hands of a selected few, presumably qualified, if my argument has been sound, for such exalted function. Leadership, somehow arrived at, political society must have. Shall it still be the acquisition of conspiring self-seekers, as it is here now, or shall it be the bestowal of the people, acting within the field of their intelligence? This is the practical question between our existing system of elections and that which is here proposed.

(c) The Principles of Democracy, Oligarchy, and Monarchy here Combined.

This system collects together the special merits of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Republicanism, each of which principles of government, by credit of its antiquity and still continuing force, has surely good claim to consideration. To each of them certain particular virtues have been customarily ascribed. As summarized by Montesquieu, to the first belong vigor, to the second intelligence, and to the last purity of purpose. The might of kings and the wisdom of princes are of ancient proverb, nor will any but the pessimist or the misanthrope deny the general good intentions of the people. For this assignment of merit there is certainly this much of foundation, that government to be powerful must be centred, to be wise must employ the superior talents of the few, and to be just must make the general welfare its cynosure, which last democracy alone can be expected to do. Each of these political forms has its acknowledged vices also. The

monarch, owning no responsibility or restraint, becomes an oppressor; in aristocracies flourish dark intrigue and cruel pride; while the popular mind tends to fanaticism, contention, and discontent. Left to itself, each of these principles has shown far more of its vicious than its virtuous side. To correct the mischievous tendency of one by the companionship of the rest has from time immemorial been the study of philosophy and patriotism. "That is the best constituted government," says Cicero, "which is composed of the three original elements, the royal, the aristocratic, and the democratic." Says Tacitus: "All nations must be governed either by the people, the first men, or a single ruler"; adding that, "a form of government constituted of these three, it is easier to admire than to believe possible." Every student of political history is compelled to admit the native force of each of these elements; nor can he either hope or wish to stint it of its due prerogative. But, thus far, no other than fortuitous or illogical mixtures of them have been arrived at. Whenever they have been brought together, they have stood on no common basis, have been diversely inspired, and, consequently, have lived in constant antagonism.

This ancient problem is here solved, and this vital need supplied. No virtue of the people will be sacrificed, superior talent will have all possible recognition and opportunity, and the dominion of the State will be single, quick, and absolute. Liberty will go hand in hand with law, and power with virtue. The people will both rule and obey; and

the genius which has heretofore so often used them as tools will itself become their honored engine.

(d) The Seeming Complexity and the Moderation of this System are of Nature.

A thousand analogies guarantee the virtue of this mixed and graduated method of political construction. It is that repeated sifting which separates minutely the greater from the less, or like those successive distillations which gradually collect the purest from the impure. It is the multiplication of social purpose into itself. It is such purification and metamorphosis of the raw material of humanity as alone can bring its hidden virtues into light and use. Never are nature's staples—the floss of cotton, the ores of iron, or the juices of the cane—of any worth till they have been cleansed, corrected, and condensed. This is what this system does for crude democratic will. It does more: it constantly tests and modifies its outcome by the intermixture and re-agency of picked intelligence. Hence may results unknown before, and nigh incredible, be safely expected. For though the thoughts and aspirations of the mass of mankind are far removed from the high duties and difficult interests of wide political society, they embody, nevertheless, the elements out of which a vital chemistry can shape the richest fruits:—so does Behemoth on the banks of Nile educe from reedy crudeness in slow digestion his sinewy virtues: so from the leaching of an acrid and limy soil flow the sweet products of the joyful vine;

and so the oak, feeding upon the cold and naked juices of the ground, gathers therefrom, as they course through its knotted joints, those virtuous combinations that at length beget alike the iron strength that braces its arms and the tufted beauty that crowns its top.

Moreover, the hindrance and delay to which I here subject popular movement is in strict conformity to natural laws. Nowhere, in her favorable moods, does nature work by sudden onset or quick construction. Where she does best she moves slowest. Not hotbeds nor volcanoes, but the slow warmth of the approaching sun, figure her beneficence. That moderation is imitated here.

When our political life shall be regulated after the manner here proposed, it will imitate those fair rivers which of yore among the Alleghanies gathered their waters from the filtering bosoms of primeval forests, and poured them along with steady flow, as pure as Arethusa's fountains, refreshing and fertilizing all around throughout their destined course. But how are these streams now changed! The steadying influence that nature had devised among her tangled symmetry of trees and ferns, her heaped-up leaves and rush-grown intervalles, has been torn away by ruthless art, and flood and drouth alternate. Destructive violence follows muddy stagnation, and nature is at war with herself. Meantime, from all sides are poured into these once pure and healthful currents the poisonous and staining refuse of a thousand chemic arts, mixed with the sewage and souring waste of pent-up populations.

How like to these are the phenomena of our present political life! A false system of elections, prompting the gainful industry of politicians, has taken from democratic will all natural behavior. From time to time, driven by party stress or sudden impulse, it rushes with headlong and destructive vehemence along a shifting channel, and stagnates when the flood is spent. Meanwhile its course is thick-bordered with the structures of unscrupulous political self-seeking, whence are poured into it from all sides the turbid waters of corruption. If we would mend this, we must invoke nature's guidance, and imitate her processes. The purposes of the people must be held back and steadied in their course, until at length, unstirred and undirtied by the delving of the politician, they shall grow to the proportions of enlightened public opinion, and strongly mingle with the tides of time.

*(e) Every Political Potency will here be duly
Represented.*

In this construction of political society, every native influence will have full scope, will be weighed in a just balance, and will take its lawful place. Nothing human will be foreign here, either in the consultation of the people or the selected Colleges of Electors; and the result can but accord with the wide eternal fitness of things. Society is naturally shaped and moved by a great variety of forces,—by numbers and character, muscle and money, possession and expectation, prestige, learning, instinct—

and whatever other force or quality resides in human kind. That system of government alone which gives effect to all these falls in with nature's plan. The political methods of the past have used some salient element or elements among them only, like the canvas of Rembrandt, now making personality darken every other feature, as in tyrannies; now inheritance, and now brute numbers; sometimes occupation, as in old Egypt; caste, as in India; money, as in the municipal constructions of mediæval Europe; superstition, as in Jewry and Utah; or literary skill, as in China. Like the partial depictions of that artist, too, these methods produce some startling spectacles, but nothing that fills the measure of nature.

No single force can ever successfully manage society. As says Lord Bacon: "When any of the four pillars of government are mainly shaken" (which according to him are religion, justice, counsel, and treasure), "men had need pray for fair weather." The combination of many potencies is the secret of political success — as from the mixture of various metals came the resisting armor and conquering weapons of ancient and modern war. It was well said, that, had Comte succeeded in making philosophy our worship, he would have been burnt at the stake by his own priesthood. He saw not that the intellectual, the emotional, and the physical are a trinity of social power, whose disunion must ever breed commotion, conflict, and disaster, but whose full harmonious conjunction and co-operation promise untold beneficence. The history of nations tells

us in a thousand catastrophes that it is hazardous to scant of due regard any of nature's various forces in the construction of political society. How often, watching too closely some single supposed celestial guide,—right, law, reason, philanthropy, or religion,—has high purpose been wrecked upon the rough environment of mixed humanity!

It is the chief excellence of the British constitution that it employs a greater share of the native elements of political power than any other ever has. Hamilton predicted, with the deep insight of genius, that our present system, based as it is chiefly on a mere count of voices, to the neglect of character, talent, and property, could never fully succeed.

Not only will all the various elements of political power be assembled and employed here, but they will also be put in proper adjustment. The right adjustment of energies is always necessary to their beneficence. Not till the touch of the loadstone, as philosophers tell us, has brought its particles into due polar arrangement, does the martial metal obey celestial influences, and become the safe guide of the wanderer. The common systems of government seem almost designed to favor the divergence and combat of nature's forces, rather than their harmonious co-operation: at least, they have effected but a mechanical mixture of them, or the casual coherence of propinquity, habit, and prejudice. But here, it is believed, a better law will obtain. Discord, wasting collision, and profitless turmoil will be avoided, or reduced to a minimum. All the elements of social force will be set in harmonious

relation to each other, and each will assert its just prerogative, and bear its proper part in the settlement of political authority and career. For, when persons shall have free opportunity, all the potencies that cling about them—station, faculty, or possession, pregnant of every minor thing—will each discharge its proper function.

By these means it cannot but be reached, in the end, that the higher representatives of democracy here provided for will give shape, voice, and effect to numerous exalted purposes of society that now lie disintegrated, expressionless, and impotent. Great things, surely, may be expected from this just combination of all the forces of the public will. The deeds of democracy, it is true, can never surpass the spirit of democracy: but it is believed that the major sentiments of mankind are good. These will be gathered and crystallized here, while all inferior opposing forces will remain incoherent and sedimentary.

(f) Increased Influence of Personal Character and Property.

In this fair contest two social potencies, it is believed, will be certain to find augmented influence. In the first place, personal character will be raised to its native throne. Of all forces high character is of least account in our present politics. It is in fact rejected by Political Organization as dangerous, or at least useless: and it repudiates politics in turn, as unrewardful, unbecoming, and noisome. Consider how seldom your most esteemed neighbors and

acquaintances arrive at public station, or seek it ; and how few of them frequent the Party Caucus and Convention, or do more at the polls than drop a silent vote ! On the other hand, how characterless are the bulk of them who now actually administer public affairs ! But under this system the influences that bring about this sorry state will lose their sinister advantage. Both in the true Conference of the People where I cradle democracy, and in the Colleges of Electors where it confronts exalted public requirements, this chief stamp of worth will have increased opportunity, recognition, and advancement.

To this not many will object : but the augmented influence of the property of the country, which is equally certain to ensue, will be apt to be less generally welcome. That that influence is now very small, the taxpayers of New York or any other city, or indeed of the country in general, will not ask to have argued. But the evil effects of the "spoils" doctrine, the growth of bribery at the polls and of venality in every department of the public business, and the unlawful control that organized capital sometimes exercises over legislatures and common councils, have made public opinion distrustful of the money power as an element in politics. But all these are in fact but perversions of a native and beneficent influence, and are due to the falseness of our present methods of political construction. Nor is it really the hand of property that has there been seen. The real capital of the country meddles little with politics. It is not the moneyed men that decide generally important

elections, but the purse of office, of the party in power, longer than the purse of the opposition. It was not those who owned the Erie Railroad that so often debauched Albany and the courts, but the adventurers who wanted to own it, or at least enjoy the profits of its use. Say what you will about the power of money, the cheapest dog that gets into the legislature can hurt a Vanderbilt a thousand times more than Vanderbilt can hurt him; and they both know it.

Philosophically viewed, property is entitled to great weight in political affairs. It is not humanity alone that is valuable to humanity. No reasonable man would destroy railroads because of railroad slaughters, or shut up the wells of the Alleghanies because women and children are sometimes burned to death by kerosene. Politics is society taking care of itself; and, logically, it regards the individual only as a member of the body politic. Every man is of infinite value to himself, but he is of no value to the commonwealth except as he profits it. He who consumes all that he earns is of no use to the community, and can therefore make no just demand on political prudence; much less can he who consumes more than he earns. The fertile farm is of more value to society, and therefore should be of more consideration in philosophic politics, than the thriftless farmer, and the toiling mule than the vagabond ass who rides it.

Moreover, the science of government deals with long periods. Political society means the continuous embodiment and empowerment of common

concerns generation after generation. Among these the material accumulations of the past are of no secondary account. They are an essential condition and chief help of human progress. Whoever would despoil property of influence in human affairs would lead us fast back toward barbarism. Each generation inherits far more than it earns. What are the labors of to-day upon the land compared with the subjugation of wildernesses that our fathers slowly wrought for us? Far better were it for the family of man that this generation were stricken out than that it should fail to pass to the next the material capital that it is heir to.

Philosophy can take a still deeper view. The law of the correlation and conservation of forces joins spiritual and material values in a profound identity. Soul and substance intermigrate. Clinton still lives in his canals, and Morse will not be dumb in death while continents endure to echo back and forth the voice of his invention.

Besides—to descend to meaner arguments—nothing else so holds a man to the considerate and earnest discharge of his political duties as to have a material stake in the country. The most concern that the majority have, or think they have, in government, is in what they have to pay for its support. The success of the British government has been due in no small part to the fact that property and political power have there commonly resided in the same hands. So, the general diffusion of property interests in this country is all that has kept the Republic to an anchorage.

Do what we may, money will always have great influence in politics. Over half the civilized world, monarchies, aristocracies, and republics rise and fall at the command of capital. In our own case money is at bottom the master of the Caucus and Convention, which are our masters. There is no power in fleeting idea or ephemeral personality to put down its long-knitted strength. Self-preservation makes it pugnacious: if labor would maim it, it kicks labor in the belly; if office attack it, it unseats office; if the law be unfriendly, it can buy out the law.

My system will not fail to set this native potentate in its lawful seat. This is guaranteed in the Conference of the people, where I inaugurate political authority, by the dependence of employment and various other business interests on capital, by the respect that the possession of houses, farms, and bonds will always command, and, on the other side, by the confidence of power that money gives. And whatever potency property may have in that popular field will surely remain in the College of Electors, to which station I advance entire every element of social force.

It is believed that this method of political construction is adapted to every community that is raised above barbarism. The substance of human nature is the same everywhere. The prevailing notion that the several divisions of the Caucasian race are fitted for different forms of government—as the Russian for despotism, the British for oligarchy, and our own for democracy—is preposterous. Equally absurd is the common saying that the

French are unfitted for any. If it is, all nations are. When a suit of garments does not fit, the fault is rightly laid to the workman's want of skill, and not to the build of the customer. So should it be of forms of government. This system would justify itself in every country of Europe, as well in Turkey as in Sweden, in Belgium, and in the dominions of the Czar, where practice has already been had in existing so-called modes of popular government, and where it has not. On the disorders and diseases of the Southern republics of this hemisphere it would work like a charm; nor till they employ it can any of them escape the anxieties, discords, and convulsions with which they are now afflicted. It would restore Italy and France to healthy life, and civilize the swarms of the barbarous East. It would to-day solve the problem of how to manage the Philipines.

(g) A True Organization of Political Society.

But this system boasts even of a deeper reach of virtue. It claims to accomplish a veritable Organization of all the native forces of politics, and thus to endow political society with the advantages that the regulated and the vital have over the fortuitous and the mechanic. Surely neither monarchy nor oligarchy can hope to do this, but only democracy. Whether mankind be wise or foolish, benevolent or malicious, makes no odds: the problem of government is to put in power general human nature, such as it is; and this can be done only by organizing all its various elements.

Organization is putting each native element in

effective relations with the rest, and is the finishing display of nature's powers and purposes. It is thereby that in vegetation a particle more or less of innocent carbon or hydrogen may make the difference between a poison and a nourishment. It wields the power in nature's laboratory that multiplication does in numbers, — accumulating each individual value upon all the rest. It is this alone that can inform grossness with a living and effective will. Without it the individual voter is but an idle particle floating impotent in chaos, like the unsorted and unsettled atom in chemistry; but, a participant here, he awakens to his strength, and gathers and sheds influence all around.

Always has political society flourished or decayed largely in proportion to the employment of this principle. The aid of this principle is constantly invoked in every social or political undertaking. Temperance, sectarianism, labor unions, grangerdom, free-soil, free trade, and every other common endeavor, are consciously vain without it. So, Organization is instinctively attempted whenever an outraged and indignant public undertakes—always in vain—to overthrow its present lords. Until the people are organized their purposes will forever wander, and their efforts be in vain. Here, indeed, is the great lack of democracy, from time immemorial. In no signification, surely, can our present system be called an Organization. It is hardly more than a mere agglomeration of persons and influences. It may answer, like the colonial system of Rome, for the purposes of a census, a

tax, or a conscription, but never the purposes of a free political life. Naught but the helping hand of Political Organization in party forms now saves the public will from utter scatteredness and impotence. The methods of that spontaneous, mighty, and expanding growth, now serving only self-seeking and fanaticism, are here undertaken to be employed to gather in the sentiments and secure the interests of the whole community. I propose little alteration of those methods except to make a corrected Caucus and Convention, which are now nominally but a preliminary, the total procedure of democratic choice.

To find analogies between this mode of organizing political society and the familiar operations of nature is no false feat of ingenuity, but a true depiction; for, diverse as are her phenomena, her methods display throughout a profound identity. Everywhere she works by graded integration. In the vegetable world rootlets beget roots, and roots the trunk; and in the human frame, a thousand fibrils join to form each fibre of the various chords of sense that gather in the brain to guide our footsteps. Each rank of nature's powers rules those above, and leans on those below, inspiring and inspired. Thus from variety harmony results, high things from mean, and from successive change a deep stability. These blessings democracy will not find till it possesses itself of nature's method of Organization.

By this means the spirit of society will arrive at an effectual unification, the commonwealth will be

solidified, and public opinion, which is now a bubble, will become a crystal. The thoughts and aspirations of the age are at present but a mob, each struggling for precedence, and each impeding the rest,

"With Chance chief arbiter,
Who by admixture more embroils the fray."

But, under the freedom and just relations that are here established for every influence, our present confused and wavering aims will be replaced by nature's clear fixedness of intent. Heretofore our career has resembled the restless rushing to and fro of childhood, or even the spasmodic dance of St. Vitus, rather than the ordered and symmetric movement of maturity and health. For example, our legislatures are busied half the time in taking to pieces to-day the contrivances of yesterday, and nigh the other half in bringing out again toys once discarded. Few are the statutes that survive their authors.

By this means, too, the life of the State will achieve an organic continuity. Thus will each generation securely inherit the acquisitions of those that have gone before, strengthening constantly the foundations of a higher career;—so that, like to what happens in the successive ages of geology, each hour of politics will bring forth higher forms of social life and better methods of political adjustment. At the present time, for lack of this advantage, the lessons of the past bear little fruit. "History repeats itself." Hardly any principle of

legislation is not still in doubt. Forms and prejudices are about all that come down to us.

This fixation of political truth as the property of society is of the utmost importance. If chemic discovery and mechanic invention could get no better foothold than the new truths that Beccaria, Adam Smith, Montesquieu, and Alexander Hamilton taught, the power of the horse would remain the only horse-power, the semaphore our mode of telegraphy, and science still be hunting for the philosopher's stone.

Thus founded on truth, and entrenched in the deep nature of things, this system, wherever inaugurated, cannot break down of itself. External violence will be its only danger. In the Conference of the people it brings together, for fair contest or harmonious co-operation, all the forces of political society; in its Representative Electors it stations all about trusty guardians of the common weal; and in its law of Office Tenure provides a speedy correction for the misbehavior of every officer of the people. Scant opportunity, surely, will there be, in the presence of such safeguards, for the chance, audacity, and secret fraud that have heretofore so constantly breached or undermined the defenses of popular government.

The conceit of some fantastic minds that a deeper reform of society than this, such as shall even rebuild the ancient and universal institutions of property and family, is needed, requires not here to be considered. These speculators are but like children who would break in pieces the choicest work of art,

to build out of its fragments playhouses to suit their wayward fancy. It is only a better way of establishing political authority that society needs; only against the present method of this has the American citizen a solid ground of much complaint.

CHAPTER VII

CREATIVE FORCES OF THIS SYSTEM

THIS plan of government is not a mere corrective, to purge from the body politic, like some homely medicine, infesting parasites and the morbidities that unwholesome surroundings have engendered there: it will also prove a fountain of positive good, an informing principle of truth, and the basis of a higher life. Claiming to be the method of nature, it claims also to possess all the beneficent fertility of nature. Endowing political society with the full possession of itself, it promises it the fruition of all its lawful hopes.

(a) It will Put the Right Man in the Right Place.

Just in proportion as they accomplish this are political institutions successful. Government must be administered by men, and "that which is best ministered is best." To have the right man in the right place is to have wisdom in law, justice in judgment, vigor in execution, and purity in them all.

It certainly will not be pretended that this object is generally accomplished in this country now. It is men of a trashy sort, for the most part, that fill our councils. Public sentiment, unhinged or infected by the prevailing spectacle, grows contented with

the scantiest range of qualifications in its representatives; and when by chance we get a man who really does honor to his office, we are as much surprised and delighted as the urchin who, after many losing ventures, at last really finds a dime in his prize package. Nay, it sometimes looks as though democracy, like dwarfs, giants, and other monsters, were beginning to pride itself upon its own deformities. The fanaticism of a party leader, the brutality of a war minister, the brazenness of an indicted senator, and the unwinking insensibility of a high executive, excite our admiration. We even are a little proud of Croker.

This failure to put the right man in the right place is believed to have been traced to its real source, and its logical correction to have been prepared. No longer, under this system, will the genius of democracy be either bewildered or hampered, and the fittest selection of public agents that human nature is capable of cannot but be habitually arrived at.

*(b) By the Prospect of this the Worthiest Citizens
will be Attracted toward Public Life.*

To regulate society as the family is regulated by a wise head, to adjust its warring interests, to clear its path from weeds, rubbish, and petrifications, to stake out its future course, and to plant new seeds of civilization, prosperity, and peace, is of all occupations the most attractive to high and virtuous ambition. Compared with it, the gathering of wealth is a mean pursuit, and all the employments

of philosophy, literature, and art a puerile. There are plenty of able, cultivated, and virtuous men in this country who will be prompt to engage in public life whenever it shall be fairly opened to them. It is not so much "the coming man" that is lacking, as the door to let him in. "Nowhere else," said the keen-sighted traveller, George Augustus Sala, "are so many men of shining talents, noble minds, and refined tastes buried alive as in the United States."

But what inducement is there now for talent or patriotic spirit to enter the field of politics? In the company of fools wisdom is the supremest folly; and virtuousness, in the midst of knaves, works like a vice. Thus it is that the best class of men have nigh all cast out public ambition: but they will quickly yield again to its high seductions when by this system merit shall be reasonably sure of due encouragement and fair reward.

(c) Then, too, will Spirited and Ingenuous Youth make Politics their Study and Ambition.

This is a phenomenon that has always characterized the most successful epochs of free societies. In the best governed states of Europe at the present time young men of promise, impulse, and opportunity make the public business their regular pursuit, just as they do engineering, farming, or sculpture. The like devotion characterized this Republic in its earlier career, constantly refreshing it with new life. But now it would be difficult to find a single

ingenuous and instructed youth who proposes to find his occupation in public life. If its very aspect does not repel him, sage experience warns him off. "Keep out of politics," says every prudent father to his son, as who should say, "Avoid the scarlet woman." But, restored to purity and fair competition by the honest system here proposed, public avocation will renew all its native attractions, and the flower of the country will gather about the service of the country. Then, and only then, will the American people successfully assert the same superiority in political skill that is now freely conceded to them in so many other fields.

Thereby we shall have

(d) Trained Men in the Public Employ.

At the present time the preparation and expertness that we insist on in private business are of but little account in public. Less special knowledge is put in charge of the canals than is needed to run a canal-boat. Special skill is thought to be necessary to shape a jug or a horse-shoe, but not to make laws. Not every one can be trusted to mend a watch, but anybody can tinker the constitution. Queer training of statesmanship we have now! The Caucus and the Convention are the academy, the party press and the party platform the text-books, and the Fagans of politics the instructors of them who principally control our affairs. So rare is proper qualification for public business that if a fit man is wanted to superintend streets, prisons, almshouses,

education, insurance or any other the like common interest, he is nigh impossible to be found. Law-makers, executives, and diplomatists habitually come raw to their work. Inland men administer the navy, and men of peace the army; and new-appointed Secretaries of the Interior, the Treasury, and the Post-Office cram for their duties, like school-boys for a sudden examination. This lack of prepared skill in public functionaries not only impedes, but robs us. No end of losses to public treasuries result from the fact that contractors and the brokers of politics understand the laws, methods, and situations of the public business far better than do the officers of the law themselves.

Nothing is plainer than the need of more instruction and experience in the business of the commonwealth. Not till public affairs are made in large degree a special study and occupation can we hope to see them well conducted. The steady light of skill and science must be substituted for the visions of closet speculation and the glancing reflections of popular fancy, now the chief impulse of social change. The most successful governments use little green timber in their constructions. In our case it may be doubted whether the best conducted parts are not those few that are still left in charge of old officers of administration, such as lively politicians call fossils.

A comparison of common with statute law furnishes a striking illustration of the advantage of skilfulness over unskilfulness in the regulation of political society. Whether as an adjustment of

conflicting private claims, a reconciliation of civil rights and duties, or a rule of judicial procedure, nothing more suitable and beneficent than the former has ever been furnished to the world. Even human slavery, the most ancient, wide-spread, and powerful, as well as the most wicked, of all the establishments of selfish power, received its first wounds from that virtuous arm. It was an edict of Chief-Justice Holt that in Great Britain outlawed property in man a century and more ago; and it was the equally bold and energetic, though less renowned, decision of Chief-Justice Harrington, of Vermont, about the same time, proclaiming that nothing but "a Bill of Sale from God Almighty" could give one man the right to own another, that gave slavery in this country its first and ultimately fatal wound.

Now the common law was wholly the work of expert lawyers, raised to the bench. It has been called, with little exaggeration, "the perfection of reason." But who will call our statute law the perfection of reason? But for the presence in our legislature of instructed lawyers, it would be in daily fresh revolt against itself, for the majority of those who sit there are as ignorant of what the law is as of what it ought to be. Only when our legislative halls shall be filled by experts in political science, as is the high judicial bench by experts of the law, will their business be as well conducted as is now the business of courts.

The growing number, breadth, and complexity of political interests demand constantly augmented qualifications in those who undertake to regulate

them. "The achievements of the age," said Gladstone, "seem ever to be confronted by new problems that almost defy solution." The railroad question alone in its various bearings involves more difficulties than all the political issues that vexed Greene, or that raised our Revolution. Only great talents, long devoted to the study of them, can solve such problems.

This system will not fail to give us

(e) A true Aristocracy, or Government of the Best.

I mean not the primitive domination of audacity, cunning, or physical prowess; not the reign of a caste, superior in birth, wealth, or occupation; not an oligarchy of lawyers, such as De Tocqueville declared our government was fast becoming, nor of politicians, which it actually is; but the freely conceded authority and rule of the most able and upright.

Some principle and form of leadership are instinctive among all gregarious beings. The mass of mankind need guidance quite as much as liberty. Always the welfare of the many has depended on the genius of the few. But for a small number of luminous minds the darkness of the Middle Ages would still enshroud Europe; and were society from this time onward to be decimated of its ablest and most earnest members, we should sink back into barbarism far faster than we have escaped from it. It is due in no small degree to her more constant employment of great qualities in the conduct of

great affairs that the government of England, of whose illustrious and instructive story I cannot make too frequent mention, has stood so long a fixed and blazing star, amid floating nebulae, wild wandering comets, and changing moons. In Italy and in Germany this very generation has seen a single commanding nature bestow unity, security, confidence, and independence on a nation before scattered, bewildered, harassed, and enslaved. Our own politics have had no reasoned or distinctive career in any extensive field except where talents beyond the common have laid out their course. It may be doubted whether the Albany Regency was not the best government that the State of New York has ever had. How great a blessing it would be to Chicago or to Philadelphia if all its polling places were closed, and all its various economies committed to the charge of such great minds as conducted their expositions.

When the most capable members of society shall be put in the steady control of its affairs

(f) System will be Inaugurated in Politics,

and the philosophy of government will grow to a science. There is plenty of political truth extant now, but it lies scattered, heads to points, friendless, often, and at waste; but by force of this improvement it cannot fail to be gathered, codified, and put to use. Not till this happens shall we know how much better is regulation than disorder.

By the operation of this system

*(g) True Progress, it is believed, will be Promoted,
and False Arrested.*

At present the soundest propositions of reform have to contend on hardly better than equal terms with the most senseless. When a man has devised some correction or improvement in policy or administration his work has only begun. He must wage a long war with possession, cultivate the favor of the masters of politics and parties, gain the ear of legislatures, subdue prejudices, and teach reason to fools. If he appeal directly to the people, he too often finds their spare attention absorbed by phantasms and frivolities, or dulness, habit, and inertia block the way. But in the instructed public councils that are believed here to be prepared true reform will find a ready and solid foothold, and receive an impetus unknown before. So too will the mushroom growths of popular enthusiasm, and the false projects of demagogues and self-seekers, which sometimes now reach even the proportions of Presidential issues, cease to vex the public calm. Thus shall we be rid of the pest of noisy pseudo-reformers, who, claiming to be the pioneers of progress, no more in fact deserve that name than did the bummers that spread out before Sherman's army to be entitled the explorers of its path.

*(h) Thus will Progress and Stability be Reconciled
and Unified.*

Our present political condition seems mixed in about equal proportions of fossilization and senseless

change. On the one hand, forms and institutions that once were full of life and beneficence, but now are stony and obstructive, still stand fast-rooted in their unprofitable place,—like ancient forest trees whose sap and verdure have long since departed, and which but hinder now the upspringing of new life,—while, on the other, vague popular discontent and emotional yearning, spurred on by the virtue of rogues and the wisdom of fools, force upon us an unending series of damaging or useless changes. But under this system each generation, it is believed, will freely cast off the effete, the nocuous, and the irksome, while all the forces of progress, assembled in full strength, will work their work unhindered and in due proportion. Meantime, all the deep-living purposes of society will hold their ground, and inheritance, possession, custom, and tradition maintain their just influence; for, a reform in methods, this system is conservative of principles. When such conjunction and reconciliation shall be had, and only then, political society will move forward with the assured step of science and the steadiness of time, and will display all the symmetric graces of organic development. Then, too, things settled once may hope to be settled for good, and the Monsieur Tonsons of political inquiry will no longer return uselessly to disturb our rest.

This system will restore to the popular mind

(i) *Confidence in Government, Respect for Law, and Content with the Public Service.*

Its continuity of authority, its combined elasticity

and fixedness, its broad basis and symmetric, well-fastened, and solid superstructure, holding the very foundation to its place, must, to every eye, forbid the approach of shattering crisis and rebellious wrong, and inspire society with a steady faith. That this security of order and prosperity is now greatly lacking is not strange. When the most important questions are settled in Congress, State legislatures, and city councils by a Party Caucus, when the revenues of the State become the spoil of its dignitaries, when taxation makes property an impoverishment, when judges practise self-seeking, when mean men sit in high places, and when lobbies make our laws, what respect can authority inspire, or how can patriotism feel at ease ?

(j) Thus will that Social Calm Return

in which alone the choicest products of brooding time have birth. Society is like a mother liquor, wherein uncounted elements and germs lie mingled. Agitated, it must remain forever muddy, and can bring forth naught but noisome gases and inert conglomerations; but, suffered to stand in quiet, so that its various components may freely assert their native attractions, its clear depths will soon be seen packed with bright crystals and growing forms of life. So will the public mind, spared its present political distractions and anxieties, freely apply itself to a multitude of profitable aims which it now neglects, and gather store of richest fruits where now are to be seen but barrenness or weeds.

(k) The Virtuous Influence of this System on Public, will be Mirrored in Private Life.

To have the right man in the right place in politics will greatly help to put him there in the more personal relations of life. Wise laws promote all forms of wisdom, and virtuous rulers every virtue. As the successful fraudulence of the Party Caucus and Convention has planted society thick with poisonous spores, so will a system of politics that gives rectitude preferment engraft its own virtuousness on every department of human intercourse. When justice, honor, and harmony shall be seen to prevail in the high seats of power, they will receive invigoration in all private business and in every household; while contention, greed, falsehood, and intrigue will get a set-back; preachers will deal more righteously with their flocks, and grocers with their customers; children will be more docile, women more womanly, and men more brave; all forms of iniquity will be cowed and every right be strengthened. Indeed, the full beneficence of this just arrangement of political society stretches beyond our present conception,—as the colonists of New England's inhospitable shores never conceived of the fertile prairies that lay beyond. This system renovates political society from the bottom; and as, when wells are dug, deep mother earth, thrown up to light and air, reveals new seeds, so now will new-enlivened democracy surprise the world with virtues hidden hitherto.

(1) The Full Benefits of this System not Immediate.

The forward movement of society is necessarily slow. Time, says Lord Coke, is the best innovator. Says Aristotle: "All that belongs to the present hour is vain against old inheritance." Twenty centuries and odd have added little to the wisdom of Solomon. *Natura non facit per saltum*. "The story of man," says Bagehot, "can change only as the slow-moving diorama changes: while you look you hardly see it alter." Growth is the most solid of reforms, and civilization its own chief promoter.

Thus neither the corrections nor the creations of this system will be accomplished in a moment. Party spirit, the habitude of self-seeking, and the prestige of the old leaders of politics, will delay for a period the full triumph of honest democracy: and when these shall have been subdued, time will still be required for the maturing, assembly, and consolidation of new powers,—as, after weeds and brambles are torn out, the soil must still have tith and seeding ere it brings forth the fruits that feed and solace man. A myriad of false tutelary images must be displaced, and new commandments from a new Sinai be printed on the public mind, before we shall know how well democracy can do. So long have the people obeyed the lead of politicians that for a spell they will hardly feel able to go alone. Both in the Popular Conference and in the Electoral College some pupilage will be necessary to expertness in new duties, and some practice for the establishment of new habits. Not in a day will the body

of the people learn how to profit by their new autonomy, nor their selected delegates rightly to appreciate and discharge their high responsibilities; nor, till after long working together, will all legitimate influence coalesce in the establishment of public authority in the full shapeliness that human nature and the civilization of the age admit of.

The complete beneficence of this system will be delayed, too, by the fact that not only must the sort of characters that now regulate democratic career be cast out, but new and better men must be found, and brought from obscurity to occupy those posts of public power and responsibility from which, under the dispensation of self-seeking politicians, they are repelled by every instinct of honor and prudence. Time, also, will be required to train them to their new calling. Not till ingenuous talent shall be nourished and practised in our politics for some period, as false assumption has so long been, will it fully discover to itself, or to the world, its slumbering virtues.

Moreover, when the right man shall have been put in the right place it will not be the mere work of a day to correct existing abuses in the administration of government, and, still more, to place it in full consonance with the intentions of the time and fit it to the grooves of progress. Equally will time be necessary to give to politics and public life, in their reformed example, the full matured influence over social, business, and domestic relations that naturally belongs to government.

Nor is perfection claimed for the results of this

system. Human nature, which knows no perfection, must be taken into account in all political calculations. This I undertake, not to medicine, but only to employ. With development imperfections multiply, like powers. The loveliest woman is not so beautiful as a butterfly, and hardly as toothsome as an oyster. Her husband is less dutiful than her pony, and the baby in her lap inherits more vices than her lap-dog. But I do claim that, year by year, this just, logical, and comprehensive plan will work better and better in infinite progression, and that time can beget no emergency that it will not prove equal to.

Not till it is adopted by a neighborhood of nations will its most sovereign virtues be revealed. Then wars will cease, and Europe will look back upon her present career as she does now upon the senseless and bloody strife of the Dark Ages: and then mankind, long shocked by the spectacle of the injuries that government so often inflicts, will wonder at its new beneficence.

The Administration of Government.

The propositions of this system relate only to the method of constituting political society. A reform in that involves all other reforms. Therefore, to turn from the consideration of their rationale and general influence to the argument of particular matters of administration, is as though Stephenson had quit the study of the construction of the locomotive to teach its engineer his duties, or to help each

belated traveller home on a wheelbarrow. It would also be to engage in an endless task; for there is hardly a topic of public policy but what is still in dispute, or a particular of administration that does not need to be corrected.







